

PIONEERING
IN THE
ROCKIES

MARY COLLINS

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PREFACE

I read one day of a story whose setting was in Boulder, Colorado. It was imaginary and as is so often the case was not what would have been written if the author had really been acquainted with Boulder and its people.

The following short stories were written partly to make shorter, hours of pain and weariness, and also to keep alive for my children memories of youth passed in a part of these mountains of ours, where there are few remaining inhabitants and many of the old dwellings are falling to decay, as those who once lived in them have passed on to other scenes and, it is hoped, to better fortunes.

There is nothing written but the simplest of memories and although none but a few who love the writer may ever care to read them, they are given with love to the shadowy past and in the spirit of this fragment of verse:

“What’s the use said a fleecy cloud,
Of these few drops that I can hold?
They will hardly bend the lily, proud,
Though caught in her cup of gold!
Yet I’m a part of God’s great plan
So my treasures I’ll give as well as I can.”

MARY COLLINS.

INTRODUCTION

Thrice blessed are they whose vision scans
The poetry of life,
In God's fair world, tho' often marred
By sorrow, care and strife.
Whose ears, not deafened by the din
Of ceaseless toil and rush,
Are e'er alert to catch the song
Of murmuring pines or thrush.
Who beauty see in common things,
In nature all around,
In lofty peak with tow'ring head,
In shrubs that clothe the ground.
A soul for life's great calling well equipped,
That doth retain the song,
And sing it when the heart beats quick
Or low, and hear it long.
When dreams of youth are but a part
Of cherished memory,
Locked in the chambers of a heart
Safe till eternity.
I hear the rustle of the leaves,
I hear them singing sweet and low,
I see the moonlight's gentle touch,
That kissed the mountain's brow;
I see the haunts where once you roamed
Wrapt in the garb of thought;
I drink of springs where, mother dear,
You've sipped a cooling draught.
And every murmur of the pines
Wafts me your tender strain,
O, let me hear it sweet and low,
Sing it, ye pines, again.
I heard it through the life you've lived
A life in service spent.
And tho' at times some sorrow crushed,
Its sweetness soon again it lent.
Filling the lives that round you prest
With many a tender strain;
Touching the rude and uncouth ways,
Making them bloom again.

MAMIE COLLINS BARRY.

CHAPTER I

THE FIRE

In the year 1871 we were living on a ranch my father had homesteaded in Bear Canon. There was a great deal to do in the way of clearing land, cutting down trees and burning brush. We all helped at the work and enjoyed piling the brush as high as we could and then setting fire to the great piles. It was great to see the flames leap up in the pine branches and hear the roaring and crackling of the fire as it burned furiously while the pine needles lasted. We would keep piling on more brush to keep up the fierce flames and thought it great fun, but one afternoon we got fire enough to satisfy us for a long time.

It was on Christmas Eve. We had been working hard for several days to get a piece of land cleared and had several large piles ready to burn. Mother knew we were intending to burn brush that afternoon and she had noticed that there was quite a breeze blowing and thought there were indications of a hard wind before night. She was very much afraid of wind and had never enjoyed our great bonfires, so begged father not to set them that afternoon but to wait until the weather was calm. Father was as reckless as she was cautious and was inexperienced also in regard to the danger from forest fires, so he laughed at her fears and set the fires after dinner.

For a short time all went well; there was just enough wind to keep them burning brightly but it soon increased in violence until it was blowing very hard and we all went to work to put out the fires. We found that impossible to do, for as soon as we had put out one, there were several others started from the burning branches that were being blown around. The fire soon got into the standing timber and before dark was threatening the house and barn.

My grandmother was an old lady, over seventy years of age, and had been in bed with a severe cold for more

than a week and there were several young children in our family, the youngest but eighteen months old, so the situation was quite serious.

Father asked me if I would go to Mr. Mathewson, our nearest neighbor on the west, two miles distant and find out if he could come with his team to take away the family in case the house could not be saved. I was very much afraid but said, "Yes, I will go as fast as I can." So off I started through the dark woods. I was in no danger from fire as the wind was blowing from the west and I soon passed the fires that were threatening the buildings.

It was fortunate that most of the fire was east of us. Our team at that time was a yoke of oxen and they were running out and we did not know where to find them and that was the reason we wanted our neighbor's team.

It was a terrible walk for me in the dark with the tall pine trees groaning and swaying in the wind but I pressed on as fast as I could in the face of the storm and prayed that I might reach there in time, so that grandma and the babies might not suffer if the house burned. Mr. Mathewson's folks were at supper when I arrived and had not noticed the fire at our place. They were very kind and soon had a team ready to go. They tried to get me to stay to supper and Mrs. Mathewson wanted me to remain that night, I looked so pale, but I said I was all right and went off in the wagon with a much lighter heart than I had on the way there, for I felt that I was bringing help to the family.

As we drove around the mountain in front of our place, we saw by the light of the fires that the house was still standing and I was happier than ever for that. We found our neighbors on the east were all there fighting the fire, as it was spreading toward their places. They decided there was hope of saving our buildings and thought it not best to take the family out unless it were necessary to do so. Mr. Mathewson kept his team all ready to go and stayed there and helped us until eleven o'clock, when the wind ceased. By twelve o'clock, it was snowing and all danger from fire was over.

The snow never had looked so wonderfully lovely to us as it did on that Christmas morning for it had saved us from a fire that certainly would have done much damage. As it was, the greatest harm done was the loss of some of our fences and the fright we all had.

My trip did not accomplish so much after all and no one knew how I suffered to make it. I was a shy, nervous child and said nothing about it.

We spent a very happy and contented Christmas day. Our home was only a rough log house and we had no presents and only the bare necessities of life, but we did not miss anything at that time, for was not our home left, and all outdoors was covered with a mantle of pearly whiteness that assured us that every fire was out.

CHAPTER II

THE OLD RANCH HOME

Our ranch home was built of logs and the spaces between them were chinked with pieces of wood and plastered over with mortar. The floors and partitions were made of native lumber, unplanned, and there were no ceilings proper, for the flooring of the upper rooms answered for them. The rafters, as we called them, were all in sight.

Father, with our help, built the house, after the logs had been put in place with the help of the neighbors, and it certainly must have been a curiosity in its way. My part in helping was holding up the ends of the boards, for I was of no account at sawing or driving nails. My older sister, Jennie, was an expert at that however, and I found enough to do in various ways.

We had three rooms downstairs and two on the upper floor; some time afterward a kitchen was added. There was only one small window for each room. Father made the doors we used at first but after a time we had two panel doors for the front room. When the house was finished, the walls were whitewashed. The floors were very rough and hard to clean at first but they soon wore smooth and were kept scrubbed clean, for our mother was a good housekeeper.

The furniture was all of the plainest kind; one old fashioned rocking chair, a few plain chairs, one "boughten bed," as little ones called it (the rest were made of lumber), and a leaf table.

The long table in the living room was made by a carpenter, and mother was very proud of it. A large round clock, on the wall above, ticked out the hours. There were two long benches, one on each side of the table; father did not make them either. He was very industrious but was noted for doing things in a hurry. Mother said he did not take time enough about carpenter work to do it well. There was always a chair at the head and one at the

foot of the table. We kept a few plants in the windows and I always thought mother could make any place look well.

After the work was all done for the day, the large family Bible was laid at the head of the table and the children all took their places on the benches. The little ones sat on the inside against the wall. Father read a chapter and afterward we all knelt while he prayed, finishing with the Lord's prayer, in which we all took part. Then the younger ones were put to bed and we, who were older, were allowed to stay up a little longer.

It was only a log cabin in the woods, but it has always seemed to me to be a dear and beautiful place. In looking back now, I cannot think of it as being rough or rude. It was home and held all our dear ones, so it was a sacred place, for home is where the heart is. I can see it all now as I sit and dream.

There was a grand sweep of mountains west and south, a large garden in front of the house and a natural grove of cotton wood on one side. The mountain cotton wood never grows large and the leaves rustle and glitter in the sunlight. At the back were great rocks and pine trees. A mountain stream ran down the slope and wild roses grew in great profusion on its banks. With the song of the birds, the sweet odor of flowers and pines, the glorious blue sky over all, and the home filled with healthy, happy children, who were innocent of the great world and its wiles, it forms a picture that grows in beauty and tenderness as the years pass on.

The family have long ago left the dear old home, and have learned many things in "life's hard school." Some of them have done with earth and its cares and pleasures and have reached the "many mansions" of their Father's house, but I think none will remember that mountain home with any feeling save thankfulness that they ever enjoyed its shelter.

CHAPTER III

PLAYTIME

The children at the ranch had very little to amuse them in the way of toys and such things but they never seemed to miss them. As soon as they were old enough, there was some work for each one to do and there was no lack of interest in the playtime.

The little girls had a play house in a closet under the stairway and some kind of a doll could always be improvised. A china head was a great prize and the rest was easy. They enjoyed making clothes for their dolls as much as though they had been ever so fine. The boys played at all sorts of things. They made water wheels to turn in the creek and wagons with wheels sawed out of boards. They had play houses out of doors and made stoves with stones and clay and roasted potatoes in them. Like Whittier's Barefoot Boy, they had

"Health that mocked the doctor's rules,
Knowledge never learned in schools."

I do not remember ever hearing them complain of having nothing to play with. Of course they had their childish quarrels too, for they were just natural boys and girls.

There were always books and papers in our home, for father was a great reader. They were for the most part of a religious character. The two books which afforded the children the greatest amount of pleasure, were an illustrated concordance, among whose pictures was that of Adam naming the animals, and the Ark of the Covenant with the wings of the Cherubim touching each other, the Brazen Laver, the Golden Candlestick, Mount Horeb and many others. It is still among the dear old books. The tissue coverings of the pictures are gone and it is soiled with many handlings, but I would rather have it so than when it was fresh and new. The title of the other was "Uncivilized Races in All Parts of the World," but the children

never stopped to think of all that, they just called it the "Kaffir Book." Father paid eight dollars for it and it was generally understood in the family that he had been "taken in" as mother expressed it. Instead of that it was a rare bargain.

It was a large, thick book of wonderful pictures and descriptions of savage tribes, their modes of warfare and ways of living and amusements. The little ones were charmed with the pictures even before they could read. It was especially a delight on stormy days; at such times there were often four enjoying it at once, two sitting in front and two little ones leaning across the table to get their look at the wonderful pictures. They were especially interested in the Kaffirs, and from them it took its name.

I can see now the eager childish faces bent over the book and hear their voices as they talked, and sometimes disputed over which had the largest share of it, and I repeat, it was a rare bargain. I am sure they tried to be careful of it, but the binding was not of the best and it was at last entirely worn out. I was married before this happened and have often wished I could have had the opportunity to preserve even its ruins. It would surely be a pleasure to any of us to see it now as the old memories come thronging in.

Mother often grieved because there were so few advantages for education, but even in this the family did better than her fears. All have been honorable and useful in their places. Little George, who was always finding strange specimens of bugs and who, we thought, should be a naturalist, has long been looking up the "lost ones" as an officer in the Salvation Army, and who shall say that is not a far more important study of nature.

CHAPTER IV

LITTLE JIM

Among all the children at the ranch little Jim was the most original, he was full of fun and yet had the sober manner of a judge. He spoke with a lisp and said the most comical things with the gravest air imaginable, and bore himself with a dignity that the rest of the children called "big-mindedness." It was rather a cruel way in which to speak of Jim's self-esteem, which did appear to be pretty well developed.

When father first came to Colorado he left the family in Michigan, and we followed him a little more than a year later. Jim was two years old when he left and had forgotten him by the time we reached Central City, so when father met us and commenced to hug and kiss us all, Jim retired from the circle and watched the proceeding with much amazement until father asked for him, and he came reluctantly forward saying doubtfully, "Well, I s'pothe you must be my father." "I suppose I am," laughed father as he took him in his arms. He did not resist the petting but still looked at father in the queerest way as if he did not feel quite sure he was not being imposed upon.

He was very good natured and never cared when the others teased him, all their railery making no more impression on him than "water on a duck's back." It was impossible to make him worry about anything that happened—he would "gueth it would be all right," and that was all there was to be said. Poor Billie, the older of the boys, was always shocked at this indication of thoughtlessness, and tried very hard to reform him. In fact we all had an idea that it was a mark of special virtue to worry, and some of us have continued the habit to this day.

We had for a time some neighbors on the next ranch west of us by the name of Harvey, who had a little girl, very pretty and a little spoiled, being an only child. She was named Louie and came to play with our children often;

she was a few months younger than Jim and they took quite a fancy to each other, and at last he gravely announced that he was going to marry her as "thoon as he was old enough." They moved to Caribou afterward, but before this Louie and Jim quarreled and she slapped him in the face. This was too much for his dignity and he could not easily forget it. One afternoon he was helping father hoe potatoes, when after a profound silence, he looked up and said anxiously, "Pa, did ma ever sthrike you when you were sthparking?" "No, my son," said father soberly, "I would not take that," and "Louie shan't sthrike me," said Jim, "not if she was as big as a houthe. I won't have anything more to do with her." But she left the ranch in a day or two after this, and Jim's wrath began to cool.

In the fall when the potatoes were ready for the market he asked to be allowed to go to Caribou with father. We accused him of wanting to go to see Louie, but he did not acknowledge that it was so. He was pretty quiet all the way until they were going up Caribou Hill, and then he suddenly spoke up with the words, "Pa, stheems to me Louie's a pretty little girl." "So she is," answered father, and a few minutes after she met him, all smiles at her mother's door. Jim smiled genially in return and the breach was healed. Louie and her parents went to England soon afterward, and when they met again their childhood was over and their paths lay wide apart. The rose-colored visions of early youth must of necessity fade for us all, but they leave a sweet afterglow that comes to us amid the cares of life as we, in our thoughts, live over again the olden days.

"Let us linger in the sunshine
Till the last glad ray departs,
Let the twilights and the dawns,
Link the closer trusting hearts;

"Then each morrow will be brighter
For the sunshine that hath been,
And life's burden be the lighter
F'or the sympathies between."

CHAPTER V

THE LAMBS OF THE FLOCK

When we went to live at the ranch, Harry, the baby, was nine months old and a sweet little fellow with bright blue eyes and fair curling hair in tiny ringlets all over his head. He was healthy and bright and, as is usual in large families, the pet and plaything of all, from the oldest to the youngest.

As he grew older and learned to talk in the always delightful prattle of babyhood, we really thought him more than commonly bright and sweet and had lurking fears that perhaps he would not live. This came from the idea that was more prevalent at that time in our little world than at present, that "it is upon the loveliest flower the blight most often falls;" "the good die young," and such doleful sayings that must have been coined in the times when it was considered something of a sin to allow one's self to be really happy.

The little girls, Eva and Alma, sometimes made a play-house upstairs in cold weather and Harry was their playmate and often stayed with them for hours. One day mother and I were working and talking together when we heard a sound of crying and sobbing. After listening a minute mother said, "It is the children, something must be wrong," and so we stepped to the foot of the stairs calling to them. They came with their rumpled, curly hair and sweet tear-stained little faces looking down at us. "What is the trouble, girls?" asked mother. "Oh," was the answer with fresh tears, "we are afraid Harry is going to die!" "Why, does he appear to be sick?" asked mother. "O, no, but we just know he cannot live, he is so smart and good and pretty."

Then Harry came running to us, the embodiment of two-year-old health, grace and activity. We laughed and cheered their drooping spirits and mother assured them that he must develop some other symptoms than those

described by them before there would be any danger of our losing him. He passed through the usual round of childish ailments and survived them all.

The youngest of the dear little girls closed her blue eyes in death when she was in her twentieth year and left a tiny, new-born babe who soon followed his beautiful young mother to the land of eternal youth.

There was another ranch baby born one autumn in the early years who was never strong and well and whom we were permitted to hold in our keeping only one brief year. He was named Frank and was also dearly loved. His eyes were brown and he had beautiful golden hair but he was too often "touched with the finger of pain" to play as Harry did, and our dear mother was always very frail in health after his birth, although she lived for many years, the last twenty being an invalid. The strenuous life of a pioneer was too hard for her but although so delicate in body, she left us the memory of a soul unshaken in faithfulness to duty, and of incorruptable integrity.

"Over the river faces I see
Fair as the morning looking for me,
Father and mother safe in the vale,
Watch for the boatman, wait for the sail,
Bearing the loved ones over the tide
Into the harbor near to their side."

CHAPTER VI

DRIVING OXEN

Our first team on the ranch was a yoke of steers, four years old when father bought them. One of them, named Broad, was possessed of a pair of long horns and an evil looking eye, the other Bright, was very fine looking and had a much more gentle disposition. They were the best travelers I ever saw for oxen, and answered pretty well for our ranch work but we had to be careful with Broad on account of his temper.

The only time we knew him to act gentle was when he lost one of his great horns. He had been let run for a time while he was growing, with a rope tied to it in order to catch him more easily, and it had formed a dent all round the horn as it grew larger. Before it was finally cut off, the damage had been done and a hard blow was likely to break it. He was lunging around in the shoeing frame one day and struck it such a blow that it cracked and bled a little. Father bound it up and thought it might grow strong again, but he seemed to suffer a great deal and father sent for a neighbor, Mr. Kelsie, to ask his advice. He thought the horn had better come off or the ox would die, so they broke it off entirely. It bled a great deal and he got very weak before it healed and his disposition changed wonderfully. He would look at us so kindly when we fed and petted him that we thought we had surely won him. There is an old saying that "Satan himself, when sick, a saint could be," and that was the way with our patient for he was as wicked as ever as soon as he was strong again.

In our family, there came four little girls first and then five boys. When we moved to the ranch, there were eight of us and the boys were all too young to work. Jennie and I being the oldest, helped out of doors as if we had been boys. Jennie was not timid and took to it splendidly but I shall never forget what I suffered in learning to drive

those oxen. I was especially afraid of Broad, a fact of which he was well aware.

I stepped on a thorn bush one day while driving and stooped to nurse my injured foot a little too near his heels and he kicked me on the shoulder. Father said that if I had been a little nearer he would have broken it, he was so vicious about it, but fortunately it was only bruised. I learned to watch out for him though and drove the oxen many a day, drawing fence poles and plowing. Father held the plough while one of us drove. When we built a fence, he trimmed the poles in proper shape and we went after them wherever they might be lying.

There was a log chain fastened to the ox yoke that dragged on the ground between the oxen as they walked along. We had to fasten the end of that chain around the large end of the fence pole and it was dragged along the ground to the place where it was to be used in the fence. Some of them were pretty good sized logs but they lay so that we could generally slip the chain under them and fasten it firmly. We got so that one of us could do this work alone if mother needed the other in the house.

I always hated to have anyone see me driving because I was naturally shy and thought of course I would be laughed at. I never felt that I was an expert at the work either. One morning father and I were building a fence by the county road; I was on the hill side, above the road, after a pole when I heard a wagon coming and saw that there were several people in it, among them some ladies. I was ready to start when they came in sight but instead of coming out I hid behind the rocks and waited hoping they would pass without seeing me, but as they came near father called, "Come, Mary, what are you about so long? I am ready for that pole," and out I had to come in full view of them all. They had a good look at me, much better than if I had started when I first saw them. I hung my head and very nearly cried, I felt so awkward and ashamed. I told father he might have known what I was waiting for but he only laughed and said it was all nonsense for me to feel so bad. They stopped at the next ranch and spoke of seeing

a little girl driving oxen but I do not suppose they guessed how I felt.

Such work was hard on calico and like materials, so mother made us plain dresses of brown denim, a little lighter in weight than the goods used for overalls and we wore strong shoes. Our hair hung down our backs in long braids. We grew brown and healthy being in the open air so much. However we may have looked, we were never bold or rough for our mother taught us too carefully for that.

CHAPTER VII

LOST IN THE WOODS

In the regular routine of work on the ranch, hunting the cows was an important item. There was a wide range for them in the first years of our life there, for beyond a few fenced patches for potatoes and grain, there were no inclosed fields and the cattle could go where ever they chose.

In the earlier part of the season when the grass was abundant, we usually found them easily, but toward fall when the feed became scarce near home, they would sometimes wander long distances and many a weary tramp did Jennie and I have to find them.

In September of our first year, we had a very disagreeable experience. It was Saturday, the weather was gloomy, there was a fog and a fine rain had been falling most of the day. Father had gone to Boulder to get provisions and we had to go after the cows as usual. We set out at four o'clock so as to have plenty of time to find them before dark. We soon discovered that we were to have trouble as they were not where we expected they would be and we thought they must be in a park where we had found them a day or two before. They were not there and the fog became so dense that we could not see any of the mountains or hills and although we thought we knew the way perfectly well, we turned in the wrong direction and were going east instead of west.

We came to a log road and thought it led to the saw mill at the Myers place, two miles from home. Instead it led to a part of the country we had never seen before and we did not know which way to go. We stopped and talked it over and made up our minds to try another direction. We were not much frightened then as we thought we must come to a familiar place soon, but the farther we walked the more bewildered we grew and before long it was growing dark and we were on the side of a mountain covered

with tall pine trees, looking at each other with white, shocked faces and crying out, "We are lost, we are lost!"

We were in utter despair for we knew there were bears and mountain lions too, a few of them at least to be found in the neighborhood and we were afraid of meeting them in this desolate place. There was nothing to be done however, but to face the situation.

There was a fine, misty rain still falling and we looked around for a sheltered spot in which to pass the night. We found a pile of rocks with a dwarf pine growing out of them in such a manner as to form a slight shelter. We were both wearing shawls and we took one and spread it as nearly like a tent as we could, then we crawled under and wrapped the other one about both our shoulders, we felt as though we could not get too near each other. Fannie, our good dog, had followed us all through the evening and kept close by at night, she often whined softly and we knew she was begging us to go home. We could only put our arms around her neck and cry, "We can't go home, Fannie, we are lost, lost in the woods."

There was a ravine on one side of us and in it a family of owls seemed to have their home, and made melody for us all through the night. Did you ever hear the mournful hooting of owls in the woods? If you have, you can form some idea of how it sounded to us poor wanderers; to this day it is the most dreary sound I can ever hear and I feel again that utter loneliness and helplessness.

We knew that mother and the others at home were suffering as well and we prayed that we might be protected as Daniel was in the lion's den.

The night wore away at last and morning brought with it renewed hope and courage. We could see our tracks in the wet earth and thought that by following them, we might find our way home. Before starting we both knelt at the foot of a large tree and Jennie made an earnest and eloquent prayer thanking God for protection through the night and praying that we might reach home safely. I could not have offered that prayer aloud to save my life

but, strange to say, I bore the terrible strain of our situation the better of the two.

We followed the trail for quite a distance but lost it at last crossing a rocky hillside. The fog lifted a little and we could see a clearing and a pile of hewed logs a little farther on. Upon reaching it, we found a good spring of water and a fine patch of rose berries of which I ate a handful. Jennie could not eat, but we both had a good drink of water. We decided to stay there until some one found us for I was sure father would rouse the neighbors to search for us and as we did not know which direction to take it would be best to keep still. I was not mistaken for all the men in the neighborhood had been out all night scouring the country and had been almost everywhere except in the direction we had taken.

We went up the side of a hill near the pile of logs to wait and Jennie was just saying, "They will never find us," when we heard a shout. We shouted back and were answered again and we knew that we were found. We then heard the report of a gun followed by other shots in several directions for the searchers had agreed upon firing as a signal whenever we should be found. We soon saw two men coming toward us. The sudden change from despair to joy was too much for Jennie and she seemed to go wild and rush toward them and fell fainting into the arms of the foremost person. The other went to the spring and brought water in his hat and I bathed her head. I remember I felt very awkward and shy and did not know in the least what to say to our rescuers. One of them, Frank Metcalf of Boulder, a young man of about nineteen, did not have much more to say than I. We soon met other parties of searchers and father came running down Myer's hill shouting for joy.

When we reached home, all the neighbors were there rejoicing with mother because we were saved. We were kissed and cried over, bathed and rubbed, given some hot milk and put to bed. Thanks to this treatment, we did not feel any bad effects from our exposure and before long, were hearing how the night had passed at home.

Father returned from Boulder a little before dark and found mother very anxious about us. He went at once for help and some of the women came to stay with mother who was almost wild. Grandmother was more calm and had prayed most of the night. We heard among other things that Billy had "troubled" very much and had been horrified because little Jim had eaten a hearty supper and one of the little girls had said she was going to have my trinket box if we were not found. Jim explained rather shamefacedly that he was "terrible thorry the girls were loht, but ma forgot to get supper and he was awful hungry and Mrs. Thampson made thuth good biscuits he couldn't help it," all of which was not to be wondered at considering he was but six years old. We only laughed about it all for our welcome had been warm enough to make up for even worse than this.

CHAPTER VIII

HERDING CATTLE

Our ranch cattle were such wanderers that during the latter part of the summer it was thought best to herd them during the day, and a couple of the children were sent out with them each morning. When at home it was usually my lot to be sent with one of the little ones for company. We all rather dreaded this task on account of the loneliness but we managed to pass the day fairly well after all. I occasionally took some crochet work and always a book and when little George was along he studied the insect world very happily while I read or worked, but it was more difficult to amuse the other children.

We did not know the names of any but the most common of the insects but that did not lessen George's interest in them. There was one kind that always came out of their holes walking backward. He would sit on the ground and sing to them in a soft plaintive voice and out they came in great numbers, rushing around as if they enjoyed the music, George thought they understood him.

There were queer water bugs near the spring down among the willows, one sort I remember looked exactly like small twigs lying in the little pools of water but if one watched them closely, a head and legs appeared at one end of the twig and it would then be seen to be an insect walking around in the pool, but if the water became disturbed in the least they again became motionless resembling bits of twigs. We were very much interested in the queer specimens of nature. I was skeptical about them until I was persuaded to leave my perch in the rock pile to see for myself.

None of us had ever seen a book on natural history and at that time in our part of the Rocky Mountains there was no teacher except nature herself but to those who love her "she speaks a varied language."

George's interest in such things never waned during his childhood but the taste was not developed as he grew older. I do not know whether he has forgotten his early interest in the insect world and have no way of sending him any specimens from it, but I often send him a Colorado flower or two in a letter and he never fails to thank me.

There were frisky squirrels and chipmunks that were quite friendly to us as we never injured them and gave them crumbs from our lunch. The saucy, bright-eyed blue jays chattered in the trees above us, their beautiful blue feathers and gay top-nots making them cheerful bits of color among the somber pines. We liked to watch the woodpeckers as they walked up the tree trunks making a rapping sound as they drove their strong bills into the wood in their search for insects. There were robins, wrens and other birds whose names we did not know and also beautiful humming birds poised above the wild flowers drinking their sweet nectar and all of them flitting around as unconcerned as though we, like they, were the native denizens of the woods.

One afternoon we were very quiet on the hillside among the rocks while the cattle fed in a little valley below us when we saw five deer come down to the clump of willows at the spring to drink. As we watched in breathless silence something startled them and they bounded away out of sight in an instant while the rapid pounding of their hoofs seemed to jar the ground. This was the only time we ever got sight of any of the larger animals. Rocky Mountain wild animals are very shy and there is not much danger of their attacking man unless driven to it by some means. We often felt afraid and sometimes imagined we saw a bear but it always proved to be a false alarm. In the evening as we drove the cows homeward pretty timid rabbits often hopped across our path and we occasionally saw a grouse hen and her brood of chickens.

I learned many verses of poetry during these long days in the woods that I have never forgotten. If I could have had new story books I should have read more and perhaps have been benefited less. Although we missed

much in being deprived of school, the district school only being held three months in winter, still do I not feel that the time was altogether lost, for even now as I look back and see again the wonderful panorama of majestic mountains clothed with tall pines, their dark green foliage like tossing plumes as they swayed in the breeze, their gloom softened by the tender green of cottonwood and willow, and the countless, lovely wild flowers all bathed in the glorious Colorado sunlight, I thank God that the book of nature is ever open and there are lessons to be learned outside of the schools. The memories of the glories that thrilled me so in my youthful days have remained with me through life and wherever I look there is still beauty and grandeur to be found for "the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork; day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge."

CHAPTER IX

SUFFERING OF LIVE STOCK

I have often wished I could do something to call attention to the suffering of domestic animals in winter all through this western country, for I think they suffer very much more in those states where the weather is not so severe than in the east where it is so much colder that people do not think of letting their live stock shift for themselves.

When we read of thousands of cattle and sheep perishing in snow storms I am afraid the prevailing sentiment is sympathy for the monetary loss of their owners and there is little thought of the patient, dumb sufferers themselves starving, freezing, dying without food or shelter in the pitiless war with the elements. I am sure the experiences of ranch life has made this phase of the situation more vivid to me than to others who have never been eye witnesses of the cruelties practiced on the helpless, brute creation.

I shall never forget our first ranch winter when we learned our first lesson on the provision that should be made for wintering live stock in the Rocky Mountains. We were as unconscious of what was required as it was possible to be for we had always lived in mining towns, and were new to the west and had no idea of the possibilities of its climate. We were told that cattle find their own living all through the winter and come out in the spring in good condition, so when father had filled the barn loft with baled hay he had purchased in Boulder and hauled up Bear Canon with the oxen, he thought he had made ample provision for any emergency that might arise in the way of winter storms.

Early in the fall we turned out the four cows with the oxen and young stock on the range where there was plenty of dried grass, but the winter proved to be unusually hard and before long the mountains were covered with snow and

before it had disappeared there was another storm and so it continued through the winter months. The poor cattle could only subsist on twigs of trees and bushes that were not covered by snow, and soon began to fail very much in flesh. The hay we had expected to last all winter was gone before Christmas and it was impossible to haul enough feed over the icy and steep canon to supply our stock, so father was advised by an optimistic neighbor to take them all to a ranch in the valley, where they could have a straw-stack on which to feed, for a moderate compensation.

We all thought this the best way out of our difficulties and hopefully gathered them together and drove them to a valley ranch with a good filling straw stack as we supposed. We spent the remainder of the winter in a state of thankfulness that our stock were so well cared for through all the storms, and in the spring father went after them with no idea of the condition in which he was destined to find them.

He started very early in order to have plenty of time to drive them up the canon but he failed to put in an appearance that night and we all became very anxious as the time passed until the evening of the second day when he came in sight driving two poor skeletons of cows and four shadowy yearlings. He came into the house with a tragic air and we crowded around to hear what had become of Spot, our largest cow and Foxy, the bell cow, who was a great pet.

We listened in silence while he told of how he had found that Spot had died in the last storm and Foxy, with a poor little calf, was so weak that she lay down at the toll gate and was unable to rise so he was obliged to leave her there. After feeding the others and resting them overnight, he had managed to reach home with them. The people who kept the toll gate had agreed to give poor Foxy and her calf every possible care, which they did, raising her to her feet in an apparatus made for the purpose every day until she was strong enough to rise unaided, and in a month's time father joyfully paid the bill and brought her home. We all cried bitterly as he told the story and I have

never been ashamed of our tears, in fact they come to my eyes as I write about it after so many years have passed.

Father never made much money raising cattle for, as mother expressed it, they generally came too near eating their heads off every winter, to pay well; but I am glad to be able to say that my parents made every effort to care for our animals in a Christian manner. I cannot have faith in the religion of a person who is cruel to any of God's creatures. The good Book says, "The merciful man is merciful to his beast," and a religion without the element of mercy is but a mere sham.

Before the summer was over the cattle became sleek and fat and long ago have passed from our sight, having lived out their harmless lives for the good of mankind, who surely should not grudge them food and shelter.

How often have I stood in the old days listening for the first silvery tinkle of Foxy's bell and when it was heard at last, mingled with the deep booming of the ox-bell, with what satisfaction the sound was followed, until at last they were safely sheltered for the night peacefully chewing the cud!

I am glad that if there should be such a thing as a future life for the animal creation, we could meet them all without a blush for we did the best that we knew for them, and I repeat that I should like to be able to do something to make others see their duty in caring for these dumb friends of ours who are placed in our keeping. Across the years I catch the

"Tintinabulation
That so musically swells
From the rhyming and the chiming
Of the bells, bells, bells."

CHAPTER X

MOUNTAIN RATS

I think every one who has lived on a Rocky Mountain ranch has found out something of the habits of the Mountain Rat. I have spelled his name with a capital letter and I am sure he deserves it. He usually finds his way over the house before very long and if you keep him out of that, there is always the cellar for him to operate in.

He has a tail something like a squirrel, a good sized head and I think is a little larger than the common rat. He is very cunning and industrious and seems to have some use for anything he can carry and finds lying around loose, whether it be anything he can eat or not. He has been known to gnaw the buttons from shoes and carry off nails, what use he makes of them I do not know.

In my youthful days it was the fashion for ladies to wear a great deal of hair whether it was natural or not. I had plenty, but thought I wanted a switch so I began to save my combings, keeping them in a small box. One night we were visited by a rat and he carried off all my combings and gnawed holes in several articles of clothing. It was very evident that he intended to furnish his house but a trap was set for him the following night and he was caught. That was the end of my switch also, for I was laughed at and made up my mind to be contented with the tresses nature had provided me.

When he finds his way into the habitation, the inmate soon discovers it, for late at night he begins to make noise enough to waken the soundest sleeper. I would prefer to take my chances with ghosts at any time for I have never been molested by them, while I have been frightened until my hair stood straight by rats, as the ranch houses of our day were easy of access to this disturber.

I remember one summer night two of them got into the house and had a quarrel, probably over the spoil they found, for they fought a terrible battle in mother's room.

Father shouted to try to scare them but they fought on, squealling and rolling over and over until he got a light and a stick and killed one of them. The other escaped through a hole in the screening of the window. At an early stage of the battle mother climbed over the foot of the bed and ran upstairs. Father said he had not seen her move so sprightly for years, and no wonder.

At another time, mother made a company cake and put it in a large stone jar with a cloth tied carefully over the top and the whole covered with a heavy earthenware plate, she then carried it to the cellar. When the company arrived I was sent after the cake. In the gloom of the cellar I did not notice anything wrong and stooped to lift the jar, but found to my surprise I could scarcely move it.

I looked more closely and saw that the plate was tipped a little to one side, a great hole gnawed in the cloth, and the jar filled to the brim with earth and stones. I was frightened and ran to the house after mother and we carried it out and found a small, dirty piece of cake in the bottom under all the rubbish.

It was a bitter disappointment to mother, because she had to set such a meager table, and to us youngsters because cakes were not common fare and we each expected a slice of that one. Perhaps that was the first cake the rats had eaten, they had the advantage of us at all events.

CHAPTER XI

A BATTLE WITH A SKUNK

Among the small animals that annoy the Rocky Mountain rancher, there is none more destructive to his poultry than the skunk. Before gaining experience, the rancher generally builds the chicken house of logs laid on the ground and thinks that is all that is necessary to keep out any animals that prowl around at night, provided there is a good strong door well fastened, but if he has not made sure and deep the foundations of his poultry house, it is visited sooner or later by one or more of these pests and he is lucky if he has not lost half his flock. Our family gained their knowledge by experience in this respect and quite an exciting time we had.

One night mother was wakened by a great fluttering and cackling among the chickens. She called father and he got up immediately and went out to see what the trouble was. He took a lantern and shot gun along for he knew from the commotion that some animal must be among them. He found the door still fastened but on opening it he saw a large skunk that had gained an entrance by burrowing under the logs. He fired at it by the light of the lantern and thought he had wounded it, it got outside and would have escaped but the moonlight was very bright and father could see it plainly so he ran after it and, overtaking it struck it repeatedly with the gun used as a club until he had killed it. Now, as is well known, its means of defense is that of emitting a terrible offensive fluid. If father knew this he certainly must have forgotten it in his excitement, and he soon had reason to repent his rashness for he received its full force in the eyes. He was blinded for the time and the smarting was so severe, that he seemed to be crazy.

Meanwhile there was great excitement in the house also. Almost the entire family were awakened by the report of the gun, and hearing father shouting, we all came down stairs, frightened half out of our wits for we thought it must at least have been a bear with which he was fighting. We found mother wringing her hands in as much distress as the rest of us. The odor soon convinced us of the presence of a skunk whatever else there might be around. We called to father but could not make out what he was saying. However, he soon found his way to the house and told us what had happened.

Mother bathed his eyes but the smarting continued for some time and they were red and swollen the next day. That, however, soon passed away but the odor did not and no amount of washing helped it a particle. He went around in this condition two or three days, no one could endure to come near him and he could eat but very little. We knew the odor would last for some time unless something could be found to kill it so he went to Caribou where there was a drug store and came home happy, for he had been given a wash of some kind that entirely removed it.

His shot gun was ruined with striking it on the rocks and altogether it was a victory very dearly won. We buried the body of the enemy good and deep but its perfume lingered long with us especially in rainy weather.

A neighbor of ours was more fortunate. A small one got into her kitchen one night. In the morning she came into the room and began making a fire when she noticed the intruder. She saw that it wanted to get out at the place of admittance which was a hole in a board near the stove. She stood very still until it darted toward her and down the hole, not so quickly but that she stooped and caught its tail. She held on to it firmly and called to her husband, who was just outside, to bring an axe. He broke the board and killed it with a blow on the head while she held on for dear life. There was no odor in that case for while she held it as she did, it had no means of the throwing the fluid. She afterwards said she had no plan formed to catch it but

acted on the impulse of the moment. That was just the way with father, but how different the result!

Another of our neighbors lost forty-two chickens in one night, among them a young pullet having three legs which was a great curiosity in the neighborhood.

I could tell of other encounters with these animals but I think this is enough on such an unsavory subject.

CHAPTER XII

RAISING POTATOES

The main source of our income on the ranch, came from the sale of the potatoes we raised and that was always our important crop. For the first few years we had very good success, the soil being virgin, the potatoes were of excellent quality and of good size, but after these first years there was some element in the soil that became exhausted and no fertilizer we ever used supplied that deficiency. It was this that finally lead to our leaving the place. As time went on the new fields we cleared for planting gave out in the same way, and we could raise them only in such small quantities as would not pay for the labor.

Our methods of work were certainly primitive at first for we used common garden hoes for digging. I have never forgotten how sore our muscles were the first few days. After a time this soreness wore away and we worked quite easily. The potatoes were planted in long rows. Father would take two rows himself and give us one each, and expect us to keep up with him digging them. This may seem an easy thing to do but it was a difficult work for me to keep anywhere near him. His hoe seemed to move with lightning rapidity and the potatoes to roll out like magic. We had to be so careful about cutting them that it was hard work to hurry as well. Father always cautioned us about this and the harder we tried the more great, beautiful potatoes we cut, as the children expressed it.

One day he was watching us pretty closely and was especially severe whenever one of us cut into a potato. At last he undertook to show us exactly the right way to dig and the first thing he did was to cut the largest one that had been dug for the day exactly in halves. We were perfectly delighted at this and he looked confused but laughed and said, "Accidents will happen to the righteous as well as the ungodly." The accidents to the ungodly were not

so much noticed for the remainder of that afternoon at least.

The little ones followed us with what we called "powder kags" to gather the potatoes as we dug them. They put the large or saleable ones in one and the small ones in the other of the cans that had once been filled with black powder. Father got them from the mines and put handles on them and they answered this purpose very well.

I think the largest crop of potatoes we ever raised was in the year 1874, and from the time the early ones were ripe until the freezing weather came, we had a busy time. Father bought potato forks that year, but even with the extra speed we made with them, we could see that winter would be upon us before we could get through, so father was compelled to use what he considered to be a very wasteful method of digging, and that was to plow them out and the entire family with the exception of mother and little Harry turned out with powder "kags" and various other vessels suited to his or her strength to pick up the potatoes that lay in seemingly endless rows.

We made pretty good time but it was tiresome work, and cold, too, toward evening, for there was frost every night as the end of the season approached. Father did not uncover more than we could pick in a day for that reason.

The children bore this hard work uncomplainingly until one day as we neared the end of our task, the wind blew sharp and cold from the north and little George, the youngest of the workers, grew pretty cold and discouraged. He had a small shawl pinned around his shoulders and his cap pulled down over his ears, and with his mournful face and cold little hands he was a woeful figure and a comical one too. We tried to cheer him by telling him that night would soon come, but it was all of no use, he commenced to cry dolefully and to talk to himself as he carried his can of potatoes to the sack and this is what we heard him say, "Me, when I was in England did I ever think I should come to this! No, never! Was I ever raised like this, no, never!" and then a fresh burst of tears. It was impossible to keep

from laughing, but we all told father we would work harder if he let the little fellow off. So he was sent away with the words, "Go home to your mother, my son." George had often heard mother say almost the same words and thought of course they applied to him as well.

When we reached home later, we found him behind the stove looking out in a deprecating manner as though half ashamed. He was eating a piece of bread and butter and although some of the children teased him a little, we were glad to see him warm and comfortable.

I can still see the long rows of white potatoes and the girls and boys working away busily, father filling and tying the sacks and piling them into the wagon at the end of the day. I can feel again the strong cold wind and the healthy appetite it gave me. How beautiful that warm kitchen looked with mother, little Harry, and a good supper waiting for us, and how quickly the food disappeared. I do not remember just what we ate but I am sure it was all fit for the gods.

CHAPTER XIII

SENTIMENT ON THE RANCH

I think all girls at some time are more or less inclined to sentiment and those who live on ranches form no exception to the general rule. I was always fond of poetry from my earliest recollection, although I have never been able to compose a line. If I had ever tried I am afraid I should have been in the place of the editor who decided to write his own poetry because it was so expensive to buy. After working for hours he was obliged to give it up with this conclusion:

"'Taint every man can be a poet
Any more'n a sheep can be a go-at."

As I grew older I was especially fond of poems having a grand and lofty sound or those describing warlike scenes although I liked hymns and those of a gentler nature as well. In my childhood the only poetry I knew anything about was in my school books and in our family hymn books, for among all the books in our home there was not one volume of poetry.

After coming to Colorado, when I was twelve years old, I had a large National School Reader which was a prize to me. I attended school only a short time afterwards, being taken out to help the family, but I still had the precious book. It was filled with selection from the best authors both of prose and poetry together with short notes upon their lives and works, and by faithful study of this book and what I picked up in various ways from such papers and books as I came in contact with, I had quite a fair knowledge of many of the great poets and writers of prose, even for an older girl than I was.

I had no encouragement in my passion, for ours was not a poetic family and took no notice of it with the exception of one sister who was very witty and made jokes at my expense, but I could no more help learning it and reciting it too, than I could help breathing.

The sublime scenery of the Rocky Mountains served to arouse all the ideality and sublimity in my nature. I would take my book and go off in the woods for hours on Sunday afternoons and admire scenery and read aloud to my heart's content. In the spring the rushing waters of the mountain torrents, caused by the melting snow thrilled me through and through and I loved to get close to the side of a swollen stream and recite my favorite poems.

I suppose I did appear strange to the family. Or course my parents did not laugh but still they were far more interested in the hard prose of life than in poetry and I went on voicing my raptures to the trees and rocks. I loved the moonlight and would often steal up stairs in the dark and open the window and lean out and watch the moon rise and flood the dark mountains with her silvery light. My sister often accused me of reciting verses to the moon and once she actually caught me at it. I had been out to shut up the chickens, the night was perfect and I was enchanted with the scene and forgot myself and was gazing upward with rapt countenance and had just finished the following verse:

“And thou, serenest moon
That, with such lovely face,
Dost look upon the world,
Asleep in night's embrace,
Tell me, in all thy round,
Hast thou not seen some spot
Where man, poor wanderer,
Might find a happier lot?
Behind a cloud the moon withdrew in woe
And a voice sweet but sad, responded, no;”

when I was surprised by a shout of laughter from her and fled in confusion.

In fact I lived in a world alone so far as that part of my nature was concerned but it was then and always has been through my life, a beautiful world; I am thankful that the capacity for finding beauty everywhere was given me.

What are lofty mountains or sweeping plain to one incapable of appreciating their grandeur! One, even Christ,

said long ago, "The Kingdom of God is within you," and mine is a goodly kingdom, I say it with all humility and take it as a gift from the good Father above.

My mother loved scenery too, but she was like Martha, cumbered with much serving, and how many there are who have never discovered the fact that sentiment would only glorify hard service.

CHAPTER XIV

BOSTON AND THE ROCKIES

The second summer we lived at the ranch, a young man from Boston came out to visit his brother who lived a few miles west of us. For some reason which I have forgotten, he spent several weeks at the place next ours and hunted cows and did chores for his board.

He was very pretty, with soft curling rings of light hair clustered around his white brow, but we girls did not admire him. He talked too much of the superior advantages he had enjoyed and showed what he thought to be his superiority too plainly, or that was my judgment of him, but being only fifteen, I might have esteemed him too lightly.

We were often visited by a minister with whom we had been acquainted in Black Hawk. On one of his visits, he had left at our house a pair of boots, which had probably been given to him in the first place, but they being too small for his use, he brought them to father. They were not large enough for father so we girls, in order to save our shoes, cut the tops off and wore them while at work out of doors. We had irreverently dubbed them Brother Wallace.

We were fencing the piece of ground west of the house one day and I was wearing a demin or drilling dress and had on the boots when father noticed that it was getting late and told me to go after the cows. I wanted to go to the house first and change my dress and shoes for fear of meeting "Boston" whom we often had met and helped to get his cows, but father said, "Nonsense, run along." So I washed my face in the creek and picked a few of the mountain larkspur and twisted them in my hair string which was probably a new shoe lace with the tabs cut off. In our day girls wore their hair tied back with a ribbon, but these were soon disposed of if worn in fencing. I fared forth merrily, little dreaming that the immaculate Willie was

following in my wake for I had asked father, if he called, not to tell him which way I had gone.

Soon I heard him blithly calling my name and I turned to see him coming, "smiling like a basket of chips." He was so glad to have overtaken me for he was afraid he could not find his cows. I restrained my wrath and tried to conduct myself with an air of aloofness and dignity but I fear I only appeared awkward and shy as usual. We were obliged to walk quite a distance before we found the cows and crossed a wide stream. Willie offered his assistance but I declined his aid and perversely commenced to cross it alone with the result that I straightway tripped, owing to "Brother Wallace," and would have fallen full length in the water, if Willie, who was close behind, had not caught me. As it was, the damage done was a very wet pair of feet and the loss of the last vestige of my dignity, for an overwhelming sense of how I must compare with a Boston girl came over me just then. Very soon after this episode we found both herds of cattle and drove them homeward along the mill-road.

We here met a tall young man from the mill, who was on his way to our place and I was again covered with confusion, both on account of my apparel and because of the sly twinkle in his eye. His talk was of how large a load of lumber his mules had hauled down the canon on his last trip to Boulder, and how many logs had been brought to the mill of late or the prospect for a crop of potatoes.

As we passed the next place Mr. Benton joined us. I liked him and was soon talking happily to him while the boys drove the cows and instructed one another. At the lane we parted with Willie and were soon at home. I went into the house and told my troubles and mother said, "Never mind, Mary, I never saw you look nicer with those blue flowers in your long, thick, brown hair;" but then, that was mother and she was trying to comfort me.

How many times the delight of the wild wood has overcome me and how powerless a "drilling dress or Brother Wallace" would be to take it away now if I could stand as I did then in my care-free innocent youth! My pleasure was

not all spoiled as it was, for I remember how the woods, mountains and glorious sunset sky looked that evening even in the presence of Willie, Brother Wallace and in the absence of the letter "r" which made my own speech sound so uncultured to my ears.

A GIRL WHO LIVES OUTDOORS

By MARY CAROLYN DAVIES

A girl who lives outdoors with winds and trees,
Who knows the feel of tree-trunks, leaves and sod,
Who wonders at the sky's white mysteries,
And in the forest's stirring harks to God—
A girl who lives outdoors with peaks and streams,
Who shapes her dreams
In the wide image of the out-of-doors,
Will never quite be beaten by the world,
Will never quite be saddened by sad things,
Or bent by trials—but she will keep her faith,
Her courage learned of winds and peaks and trees.
The bravery of the woods will give her strength;
The beauty of the world will lend her wings.

CHAPTER XV

A RUNAWAY WITH OXEN

When I was about sixteen years old I was in Boulder working for Jay Sternberg. I had been there a few weeks only when father came after me to go home to the ranch with him for mother was down with inflammatory rheumatism and I was needed to take care of her and keep house.

This was during the time we used the oxen, Broad and Bright, for a team. Father had brought down a load of poles and had only the running gear of the wagon on which to ride. He bought some groceries, which he put in a barrel, and two sacks of chop feed, he then tied all firmly to the front axle making a seat for us of the sacks of feed.

I took my place next to the barrel and he climbed on himself. I was used to riding almost any way so this arrangement suited me very well; I was so anxious about mother I would have been willing to walk.

Before leaving town we went to the Little place where I had worked before to get some article of clothing I had left there. On our way down we passed north of what is now known as the old creamery building which was used as a blacksmith shop at that time, but drove straight up Pearl street as we started home.

The oxen had often been shod in that shop and they had a decided dislike to being driven anywhere near it. Father had difficulty in getting them to pass it at any time. He forgot all about this aversion and calmly drove on. Not so the oxen, and as we neared the building they began to act rebellious. Father kept his seat thinking he could manage them but they would not keep in the street turning out from the road on the south side, commenced to run away across the rough prairie.

I have never wondered why the city was named Boulder since that ride. I hung on to the barrel for dear life and if I had not been strong and had a good grip on it, I

could not possibly have kept my place. It was not a seat, for the boulders, millions of them, jolted so that I was up in the air most of the time. Father stayed on as long as he could but having no barrel to cling to, was thrown off at last.

The cattle still galloped on and I expected to be killed of course, but I did not think of anything especially for my faculties, except the one of hanging on, seemed to be suspended. I saw the creek just beyond us at last and thought I should be thrown off when they crossed it but, to my astonishment, when they came near the water they stopped running and stood there with their tongues hanging out, their sides working like a blacksmith's bellows and in a moment began to refresh themselves with a good drink.

I got down as nimbly as possible and looked for some sign of father. He was hurrying toward me and some people who saw the runaway were with him. He was not hurt and I was only bruised and sore from the jolting. The cattle stood as quiet as lambs, no one would suspect them of being capable of running away.

Father tightened up our seat a little and we started on again. They were particularly gentle during the remainder of the trip and on the way up the canon wicked old Broad often looked back at us appealingly as if to say, "Don't you think I need a little rest?" We called him an old rascal and said he did not deserve a rest but he got it just the same.

Self-preservation is the first law of nature with animals as well as most human beings. He knew he had been hurt in that shop and ran away from it as fast as possible and upon thinking it over we could not blame him so much after all. Bright was always gentle and would not do wrong of himself which is another example of "Evil communications corrupting good manners."

CHAPTER XVI

LOST IN THE SNOW

When I was in my seventeenth year I worked at Nederland a few months and some time in March found myself out of a place. This did not trouble me for I was not suited and had only stayed there because the mistress of the house was ill. There was a little motherless girl at Nederland working around for her board and clothes and the people I worked for learned they could get her so that set me free. She came at once while I was still there and I was asked to remain a day or two and show her how the house was kept.

She was the most forlorn little girl I had ever seen. I am sure she did not possess enough clothes to keep her warm or even clean. She had not been trained so that she could work well but tried to do her best for me. She had to sleep with me and I knew she was not very clean but I made no objection. As she turned to the far side of the bed I drew her toward me and put my arm around her. She said, "Oh, what makes you do that way? Everyone else tries to get as far away from me as they can." I tried to comfort her and told her to try to do the best she could and people would not always feel so toward her.

She was a poor ignorant little girl, who knew almost nothing and I was only a girl myself and all I could do for her was to show her a little love the two days I was with her. She had brothers and sisters both, she told me there were five children altogether and an apology for a father also. Some were at home with him on a ranch and the rest whenever he could find anyone to take charge of them. I saw him the day after she came.

There had been some trouble about her being whipped at the last place she had sojourned and he had come over to town to see about the matter. He was rejoiced to find that she had another place and I heard him, a big, strong man, tell Mrs.—, a woman who had neither heart nor brain enough to train any child, even though it should be her

own, to pay no attention to outside talk but in case she needed a whipping to just give it to her. Not a word of kindness to his child but she was called in and told to do whatever this woman told her, that was all. My heart burned within me with indignation and pity for her, she took it stolidly, she had never known what it was to have a father such as God intended a child should have, and her mother was dead.

I have never found out definitely how she came out of her dire struggle that commenced so soon in life. I did hear of her father about ten years afterwards. He had married again and entertained father on one of his preaching trips. He said he was doing well, had a good wife, and his children were all old enough to care for themselves and were none of them at home. I told father he had much more than he deserved, for my mind traveled back to the desolate little girl in Nederland, and the words of the good Book came to me which runs something on this wise, "He that provideth not for his own hath denied the faith already and is worse than an infidel."

I had an exciting experience the day I left her. The only way for me to reach my home was by stage which ran six miles northeast of our place. From there was a foot path to a wagon road that led to the ranch. I had been through that way twice in summer and felt no fear as I left the stage and commenced to climb the steep mountain side.

There was a "batcher's" cabin by the road side just where the trail began, and as I went on I noticed a man on the opposite mountain, drawing poles with one horse. The snow was melting so the water ran down the hill in little streams and I was in fine spirits, for was I not on the way home?

After reaching the hill top, I followed the path on through the timber as long as I could, but there was a thing I had not counted on, which was that the winter snow still lay in heavy drifts all through the woods and I found it impossible to find the path, but I still kept on in what I thought was the right direction, thinking I would soon come

out in the wagon road. Instead of this, the snow drifts kept getting deeper and deeper and I could scarcely walk through them until at last I could go no farther and realized for the second time during my short life, that I was lost and this time, alone.

As I had been struggling on, there had been the hope that I should find the road, but after I gave up in despair, I cried aloud and screamed for help but there was no answer from the desolation around me. It was cold, too, in the shade, and I pictured myself as lying there for weeks or months and no one knowing where to search for me, as my family did not expect me home.

At last I began to pray in earnest and grew more calm. I had a good old uncle in England of whom I have heard mother say that he never finished a prayer without these words, "We thank thee, O Lord, for our reasonable faculties;" and the effect of prayer on me was to restore mine. I began to think clearly and, on looking back over my trail, it all came to me in a flash, that all I had to do was to follow it back to the stage road and I could surely find some one to help me. I thought of the man I had seen on the way up. As to fear of any man I might meet on that lonely mountain road, ten miles from any town, it never entered my mind.

So I commenced following my trail backward, and as I went on, I found my shawl, muff, the bundle of clothing I had carried and my scarf. I had dropped them all unconsciously in my frenzied journey. When I came to the cabin, I found the gentleman there holding a horse which he had unhitched from a dry pole. I told him my story and asked him if he could help me find the place I was looking for. I noticed while I was talking that he had on only one boot, the other foot being wrapped up and covered with a gunny sack on the outside.

He told me he would do anything he could for me and would take me right to my father's place but he had only one horse and had been laid up six weeks with an injured foot, and was now only getting in a little fire wood. However he could easily take me to the road and from there I

knew the way perfectly well. He said I must be tired and hungry and as he was just about to get his dinner, I should have the best his cabin could afford, which, he said, was not much. Perhaps it was not, but to me it seemed to be a haven of refuge. I said gentleman, and he was, for clothes do not make one worthy of that title. He treated me with a fine courtesy I have never seen surpassed. After building a good fire, and putting on some potatoes to cook, he went out to attend to his horse, telling me to make myself at home and try to dry my feet.

After I was alone, I again felt a smarting just below my left knee which I notice when coming down the hill, so I proceeded to ascertain what was wrong. To my surprise, I found blood dripping from my shoe and a quantity of blood-soaked snow, so I began to cry, but I thought I must find out how bad it was and ask the man for something to tie it up. As I uncovered it, I saw a large three-cornered jagged cut just below the knee-joint, on the inside of the limb. It was only a flesh wound but it looked very terrible to me in that lonely cabin, dripping wet, cold and hungry as I was, and would indeed have startled any one. It seemed to have pretty nearly stopped bleeding owing to the snow that was packed around it. I cried a few minutes and then heard the owner of the cabin coming and hastily dried my tears. I told him I had hurt my knee, how or when, I could not tell, but that I needed something with which to bind it. He went to the other end of the room and I soon heard him tearing some kind of cloth and he brought me some white bandages and a box of Arnica salve. He said he was using that on his foot. I think he saw I would rather be alone so he had more work to do outside while I bound up the wound.

When I had covered the "fearsome" sight, my spirits began to rise as I bound it firmly, especially above the hurt and over all wrapped my little scarf of wool again and again as tightly as I could bear it. My host soon came in and prepared dinner and I offered to help him, but he said no, that I should sit by the fire and dry my clothes. I remember what we had for dinner, there was fried bacon

and potatoes, good cold biscuit and fine coffee with sugar and plenty of them all. If you should happen to think of a few more dainties that would make up your idea of a good dinner, you will not be in the plight that I was in that day.

He talked pleasantly and said he had heard of our family. His name was Robert McKee and he had been chopping cord wood when he had hurt his foot. As soon as dinner was over he brought the horse and lead it along while I rode. As we passed up the hill-path I noticed him looking down and at last he turned and said, "There is blood all along the trail," and as we reached the point where I had turned too quickly toward the west, there were still crimson drops on the snow as far as we could see. He said I must be hurt a great deal worse than he thought and told me on no account to walk home but to stop at a ranch on the way. He would take me there and he knew there was a team there and they would gladly drive me home.

He had already walked two miles when we reached that place and I could see was not able to go farther. He left me on the hill side just back of the ranch house. I thanked him for all his kindness and promised to stop at the house, but as he went away and I walked down in front of the house, I began to think differently. I was much refreshed, was not very lame, and thought I would go down to the next place which was Mr. Mathewson's; but when I reached there, the family was away and I felt as though I could get home, where I arrived just after sunset.

My approach was discovered, and shouts of, "Mary's come," rent the air. As I walked up the garden path, I wondered how I should be able to show that ugly tear to mother without scaring her out of her wits, for she was weak and very nervous. As they crowded around me, I told them I had been lost and that was what made me so late; then father ran in and caught me around the waist and began to whirl me about the room as he often did, but I had been through too much that day for rough play and as my injured limb struck the top of his boot, I cried out, "O, I am hurt, put me down."

In a moment more I was in the big rocking chair in front of the fire place and he was taking off the wrappings to see what had happened. All the time I was trying to keep mother from being frightened, but when father lifted the last covering, she commenced to scream and wring her hands as though I had been half killed. I said, "Why, ma, don't feel so bad about it, for I did not feel it at all; I don't know how or when it happened but that made her feel worse than ever, for, as she truly said, "What a state of mind you must have been in for that to be possible!" I suppose I fell on some broken branch of a fallen tree for I know I climbed over many. I was so happy to be safe at home instead of out among those snow banks that the rest all seemed as nothing.

My wound was long in healing, although I was not allowed to step on my foot. I think it should have had a few stitches and a little care from a physician but such things were gotten only in extreme cases in those days. Father went after a woman who had the reputation of being a good nurse and she had him gather some pitch from the trees to put all over the wound which was very sore from the long walk. She had a fine cup of tea and enjoyed herself immensely by telling long stories of accidents of various kinds, possible and impossible, and that was all the good her visit did, for by morning I was in such misery with that sticky stuff pulling on the raw surface that I begged to have it taken off. Mother and Mrs. Harvey, our neighbor, removed enough with lard and warm water to relieve me greatly and applied something more soothing.

We had never heard of microbes then and I suppose they did all they could for me but, thanks to mountain air and a healthy young body, they did not get into my blood. Mother took the best care of it that she could, but it took many weeks to heal. It healed from underneath, and the part that protruded so and horrified us, gradually came off and left a large scar and a depression which remains to this day.

I was cautioned over and over again never to start for home without notifying my parents and I never did. One lesson in that line was sufficient. I was asked whether the "batcher's" dishes were perfectly clean. I was glad to be able to answer truthfully, "I do not know." They were all that I needed at that time and that was sufficient for me to know.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PROSPECTING FEVER

A few years after we settled on the ranch, gold was discovered in Magnolia. It caused a tremendous excitement as ever so small an amount of that commodity always does. Father was a miner by trade and had worked at it all his life until his health began to fail when he pre-empted our land and turned rancher. He was much excited over the find in Magnolia and reasoned that as we were only two miles distant, gold and silver might be found on our place as well.

Magnolia has never been a large mining camp, the gold being found in what father called "pockets" and not in regular paying veins, and although there has been a considerable quantity taken from these mines, the veins generally do not run deep.

For a time there was a great deal of prospecting done in our neighborhood, as well as in all the district around. Father caught the mining fever and had it bad. Mother did not approve of it and counselled him, waiting to see how the new strikes turned out, but he, being of an impulsive, sanguine disposition, could not be restrained even by mother. She usually dashed cold water on his hopes in such matters and her prophecies so often came true that whenever she said, "Mind you, it will not come out right," I had a feeling that an oracle had spoken, and this sentiment was shared by the rest of the family.

In spite of her predictions he commenced prospecting. There were plenty of veins cropping out all over the mountains and he soon found one that he considered promising enough to develop. The little boys helped him all they were able and soon became infected with his visions of a carriage and other undreamed of luxuries in the near future.

We had an open fire place in the far end of the living room and also a stove nearer the center for cooking and

for comfort as well, for the fireplace consumed so much wood to keep the room reasonably warm that we used it in the evenings only; but it was a splendid thing to dream dreams and see visions by. I can see father now and the little boys as they clustered round his knees, he smoking his pipe and telling them what wonderful things were in store for us all when he should make a strike.

Mother was not included in the circle; she sat by the table always sewing and we girls helped her as we could on seams and hems. (I am glad to be able to say that I bought and paid ninety-seven dollars for a good sewing machine as soon as I was old enough to lighten her labors a little). She was doing practical work and had no time for visions, but as I write I can not help regretting that no dreams reached her; she worked so hard and there was nothing to gild her sky, for although she was very religious, and that afforded her much comfort, she spent more time in fearing the Lord than rejoicing in His gracious loving kindness. There was little to encourage her in the life we led and she had not been used to such hardships in her youth in her home in England.

There was a difference in our case, for the mere joy of being alive and seeing the world of nature around us was enough to keep our youthful spirits up, and a dream or vision now and then did not seem impossible of realization.

It required hard work and money to prospect and it is as dangerous as any other mining. Powder, fuse, drills, hammers and a heavy rope, windlass and bucket, all had to be purchased before long, as the prospect became deeper. Mother's "Mind you's" became more and more frequent as time went on. The indications for a pay streak were always good but never developed anything better. Father often brought home pieces of ore to roast in the fire place in the hope of detecting the precious minerals he was in search of, and one morning there was the wildest excitement in the old log house, for in raking out the ashes he discovered what he called "great buttons of silver" which he thought came from his specimens of ore. I have seen real silver that has been melted from the rock in a similar

way. We all came down stairs, dressed or otherwise, as we happened to be, and found father with quite a handful of what looked like pieces of silver of various shapes. Mother soon arrived on the scene and looked at them with her prophetic eye and her verdict was, "Buttons indeed, but they came from an old pair of overalls I burned in the fireplace yesterday." Our hopes were dashed at once but father could scarcely believe it and showed some of them to the assayer at Magnolia and it proved to be just as mother had said, nothing but overall buttons.

Spring happily put an end to the prospecting, for the ranch work had to be done and all were soon busy cutting seed potatoes and planting them. Father did not give up, however, and "tried his luck" as he called it again and again, while mother mourned for the lost calicoes, gingham and other household supplies that might have been bought with the money thus wasted.

He struck one mine in which he had special faith. It was a vein bearing free gold but in such infinitesimal quantities that it would not pay for milling. Father was so sure that it would prove richer farther down that he sunk the shaft eighty feet.

The teacher of the district school was a young man who called himself Clark and claimed all sorts of virtues, but who proved to be an all around fraud, his name even being fictitious. He took a great interest in this prospect, often giving his opinion as a geologist that a fortune was in sight. By some means he one day brought some mining speculators to look at it. He talked to them very fluently and from time to time picked up samples of ore which he handed to them telling them to have them assayed as they represented the character of the vein. Father looked on for a time until he began to suspect that something was wrong. He saw that the ore Clark had given the men was not from his mine in the first place and frankly told them so. He could not account for it being there and felt confident that it had been taken from another lode. This of course put a stop to all the proceedings. Clark was very

angry but father gave him a reprimand and sent him about his business.

There never was any money made from the ranch mine, for father, being an honest man and a Methodist, was not cut out for a mining promoter or swindler.

It is strange how the lure of the mines will overcome men so that they will spend all the best years of a lifetime in a "batcher's" cabin alone, always prospecting for gold or silver, in many cases never finding even enough for their bare living and rough clothing sometimes working for wages long enough to get a fresh start and then back again to their lonely life, led on by the "Will o' the Wisp" of fortune that ever dances before their eyes. I have known of grey haired men living in this way for years and dying alone at last, being found by some one of the scattered neighbors who kindly performed the last sad rites.

One of these prospectors lived in a cabin near our home in Caribou, after I was married. His home was somewhere in the east and he had come west in search of a fortune. Working for wages was much too slow a way in his estimation for gaining his object, so he set out to find a mine that would make him rich.

He came over to call on us occasionally and borrowed a wash tub and board at intervals. At such times his coat was buttoned up close while he washed, and in due time we saw a solitary shirt on the line. If he ever wore any under-clothing he dried them in the house, for the shirt and a flour sack or two he used for towels were all that ever appeared on the line.

After some years he by some means accumulated sufficient money to make himself decent enough in appearance and rich enough in pocket to make a visit to his old home where he had left a sweetheart seven years before, but he soon returned and took up the old life. Several months later he came over to our house looking so dejected I could not help asking him whether he was in trouble or ill. He told us the girl whom he had loved and trusted so long had married another. I felt very sorry for him, and my husband said he was sorry too, but did not blame the girl

in the least for he thought seven years of waiting was a trial long enough, and as there was no more hope when he left her the second time than there had been the first, he thought he would have taken the first good chance just as she had done. He advised him to cheer up and make the best of it and if he ever again thought of matrimony to get at something more certain in the money making line than prospecting.

The poor fellow went to Leadville when the mining boom struck that place and we never heard of him again. I am inclined to think that he was among the hundreds who died there of hardships rather than that he ever made a fortune. He was a good man, a Christian and a good neighbor, but his was a wasted life, spent in fruitless pursuit of the gold that perisheth.

I have scarcely ever known of one of these old prospectors striking a fortune; it is more often some one who is young and seems to happen upon it without great effort, while they live out their dreary lives, the victims of deferred hopes.

There was no danger of father drifting into that sort of life; there were too many hungry mouths to fill and more than this, he stood somewhat in fear of mother's gift of prophecy, enough at least to hold him in check. After a time the excitement died out entirely and we all ceased expecting the ranch to produce anything for sale other than potatoes, butter, eggs, chickens and an occasional beef.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SNOW STORM OF 1876

I wonder if many people remember the snow storm of May 20th, 1876. Our family were living at that time on the ranch in Bear Canon. The weather had been favorable for some time, the spring planting was almost done, the grass had a good start and we thought there was no danger of any more snow for that season.

For a few days before the big storm, rain and sleet had been falling at intervals and as night closed in on the 20th it turned to snow. It came down steadily all night and by morning there were two feet of heavy, wet snow on the ground and it was snowing as fast as ever. We were all surprised and not a little worried, for we had a team of horses and a good many head of cattle and scarcely anything on hand for them to eat and besides all this we had one hundred young chickens from a few weeks to a few days old. How we hoped it would clear as the day passed, but it kept right on and by afternoon had reached a depth of three feet.

Father went to the barn toward evening to feed the horses, and while he was in the loft throwing down a little hay he noticed a cracking of the roof. He jumped from the doorway of the loft to the ground, and not a moment too soon, for just as he struck the ground the roof fell in with the weight of the snow. He was pretty badly frightened and it was a narrow escape for him. The barn was built of logs and the flooring of the loft did not give way and the horses were not harmed.

He at once thought the house was in danger of the same thing for he did not think it could be much stronger than the barn, but it was divided in two rooms upstairs and the partition must have strengthened it. The roof was quite steep and he soon shoveled the snow off.

That evening the weather cleared and turned warm and by the next day at noon the water was running every-

where from the melting snow and the seed potatoes were soon washed out of the ground. All hands turned out to guide the streams in proper channels but in spite of all that could be done the land was so badly washed that part of the planting had to be done over. The roads were impassable for some time.

One morning about a week later my father went to get the horses from a field into which they had been turned the evening before to graze. To his surprise they were nowhere to be seen although he could hear the bell tinkling plainly. He could not follow the sound of it on account of being deaf in one ear, so he went all the way around the fence trying to find the place where they might have broken out. The fence was sound and he could find no tracks outside of it. He was very much puzzled and finally gave up and started for home to get some one who could hear straight to help him. Just as he reached the bars he heard a mournful whinny from old George and happening to look in the right direction saw what appeared to be a horse's head close to the ground and upon going nearer found both of the horses in a long gully that had been made by the rushing water a few days before. How they got in there without being hurt was a mystery for in the shallowest place a tall horse could barely see over the top and it was much deeper in the other places. It took considerable labor to get them out for the gully came to an abrupt end at a rocky hill side.

I do not remember how deep the snow fell in Boulder, but I think it must have been eighteen inches or more. The water in Boulder creek was very high and most of the bridges were washed out and much damage done on the valley. After a wet season in the mountains many springs begin to flow that later in the year show no traces of their presence and the land around becomes very wet and soggy although on the surface it might look firm. One afternoon Billie and I were ploughing potatoes in the field above the house, which we called the higher field, when we drove the horses into a place of this description and before we realized the danger they were floundering in the mire. I took the

reins and tried to guide them to the firm ground. Dolley reached it first and finally they both got out, but poor old George was so exhausted that he collapsed and lay on the ground stretched out so still that we thought him dead and were much frightened. It would have been a serious blow to us to lose him and aside from the loss we loved him. While we were crying over him we saw that was still breathing faintly and after a while he began to move the ear that was up, slightly, and then opened his eyes and looked at us so lovingly, as if he wanted to comfort us while we petted and prayed over him, for we always prayed when in trouble of any kind, and soon to our delight he was able to stand upon his feet. We did not do any more ploughing that day but put the horses in the barn to rest after their struggle.

It was strange to have a horse and boy of the same name in one family, but the dear old horse was named before he came to us and refused to answer to any other and at this time the boy was called "Georgie" more often than "George" and there was no confusion.

Old George came the nearest to possessing human understanding than any animal I ever saw. Our mother was especially fond of him and often rode him; he stepped so carefully when he carried her that she was never afraid of him, but he was the only horse she ever had the courage to mount. How I should like to have a picture of my dear mother with her timid and yet proud look as she sat upon the back of our faithful horse.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ALLEN FAMILY

In the year 1876 I came to Boulder to work in the family of Dr. Allen. I was a discouraged, shrinking girl of nineteen who had been gaining wisdom by experience in the ways of the world.

I remember how I dreaded to meet the family. It was on Friday, too, and although I was not inclined to be superstitious I wished I could begin on some other day. I thought then and still think that girls who have homes and are privileged to remain in them ought to be very happy.

We started from the ranch quite early and the ride down the canon, much as I usually enjoyed it, failed to cheer me. After reaching Boulder we stopped at the drug store first and one of the doctor's boys directed us to the house.

I found everything quite different from what I had imagined. Mrs. Allen was a sweet, happy looking woman and spoke very kindly to me. The house was full of merry children and there was a dear baby. I soon began to feel more comfortable.

Dinner was soon ready and we all took our places at the long table. The doctor sat with a large pile of plates before him, the blessing was asked and he helped every one. There were eight boys and one girl in the family and it all looked very homelike to me. I noticed a motto on the wall which read, "He giveth power to the faint and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall be weary and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary and they shall walk and not faint." I was used to children and loved them too, so I was charmed with all I saw and before father left I got a chance to send word to mother that I was sure I should get along all right.

I soon learned the ways of the household. Mrs. Allen laughed and said I would soon stop asking what they were to have for dinner for the fare was not varied enough to make it hard to remember. Her cheerfulness impressed me from the first. I had never met anyone who took whatever came as she did.

The first time we had unexpected company I went to her and asked what I should do. She said, "Put on the extra plate and have everything just as we intended before." There was no fuss nor worry and that was the way she managed everything.

She did not mind in the least any small talk that came to her ears. I was very indignant when I heard that someone had said the children did not look like a doctor's family, but she only laughed as usual. It was all very strange to me for in our family we worried over everything that happened and I am afraid over things that never came to pass. There was a welcome for all who came and I saw that was of more importance than anything else. I took it as a compliment years afterward when my brother told me I would dish up a soup bone for company as cheerfully as a roast. And why not, if it were the best I could offer? I learned that of Mrs. Allen.

So time passed pleasantly for me. I did not mind the work the little ones made, for I loved them. Perhaps I was slow but I am sure I tried to please them all. Mrs. Allen often sang and played for us and that winter she read aloud to the family "Marmion" and "The Lady of the Lake." I had not read them and have never forgotten how charmed I was, especially with "Marmion." I read it over and over and memorized whole pages and still remember them.

Time has brought its changes to us all but I always think of that family as I knew them in the old days. My life since then has had its times of light and gloom and the duties that have fallen to my lot have been the homely ones, but in looking back over it all, I can say, "I tried to do my best," and I am sure my best has been made better by my stay in that home and the influence of the good woman who was its sunlight. I have learned too that true

happiness comes only with service, however humble that service may be. A verse of one of Mrs. Allen's songs comes to my mind now:

"If you cannot in the conflict
Prove to be a soldier true,
If where fire and smoke are thickest
There's no work for you to do;
When the battle field is silent
You can go with careful tread,
You can bear away the wounded
You can cover up the dead."

"In as much as ye did it unto one of the least of these, my little ones, ye have done it unto me."

CHAPTER XX

MY GRANDMOTHER, ANN UPCOTT

She was a dear old lady who came over from England to us when I was about seven years old. I remember very well the night she arrived and how pleased we all were to have a real grandma. She had the sweetest face with soft brown eyes and long, thick dark hair and she did not look very old although her figure was bent. She seemed like some delightful old lady who had stepped right out of a story book. We all loved her very soon and went to her with our childish joys and sorrows.

A mining location in northern Michigan must have been a great change from the beautiful English town of Ashburton where she had been born and lived all her life, as her ancestors had done for many generations before her, until her children had left her there alone and for love of them she crossed the great ocean and took up life in a strange new country without a murmur.

I did not understand it all when we had her with us in our careless childhood, but her goodness and gentleness have been like sweet incense in the after years since I have realized what a saint she was. She had a volume of Isaac Watts' hymns and that and her Bible were her constant companions when she was not busy with the care of the little ones. I often read hymns and the Bible to her and she praised my reading and told me what a wonderful scholar I was. In fact she was so much impressed with my attainments that she often mentioned to strangers that, "Our Mary is a good scholar," and sometimes to my confusion for I knew there were things to be learned in the line of scholarship that grandma had never dreamed of and I was only at the beginning of it all. She could read her Bible and hymn books and was satisfied with that.

I have heard of another old lady who could not read at all but yet was one of the best scholars in her parish for she could "read her title clear to mansions in the skies"

and there were then as now some very learned people who could not do that. Dear old souls, they know nothing of worldly learning but were post graduates in faith and hope and the other fruits of the spirit such as patience, gentleness, meekness and the love that suffereth long and is kind

While we lived in Michigan she was able to attend church and prayer meeting dressed in her quaint and pretty English clothes. She told us her best black dress was made of Cober cloth it looked something like serge but was softer and finer. She sang sweetly and always offered a prayer in meeting. I went with her usually, she would always kneel and I knelt beside her.

After a few years we all moved to Central City, Colo., but grandma was never able to walk up and down the steep sidewalks of the Rocky Mountain mining town and from that time she failed slowly. When we went to live on the ranch mother hoped it would agree with her better there, the altitude being lower but she did not improve any. If she ever felt the loneliness of the place she never spoke of it and was always patient and cheerful. She would sit near the door in the summertime and look out at the pine trees and say, "They be like the fir trees at home."

She never heard any word of her two boys after we left Michigan. They had been working in the coal mines of Pennsylvania when she last heard of them and uncle Jack had visited her once in this country. They had not been regular in writing to her and we were not alarmed for some time, but at last a letter came from the wife of the older one asking if she knew anything of them. After that time we thought they must have been killed in one of the explosions that are so common in coal mines and perhaps no one knew where their families were to be found. In this silence, so much worse than death in many respects, poor grandma patiently endured.

She would sometimes say, "Oh, I wish the dear Lord would let me know what became of the dear boys" and then we would hear her say "Oh, blessed Lord," and we knew that she was praying and afterward the peace of God was in her face.

She never seemed to be very ill but just failed gradually and in January of our second ranch winter she took to her bed and lay there day after day. She was so quiet and patient we did not dream of her dying. I see her plainly now lying on the rough lumber bedstead—that was the best mother could do for her—with patient, gentle face and her beautiful, dark hair, a smile for each of us as we came and went so thoughtlessly, little dreaming how soon we should lose her.

“Strange we never miss the music
Till the sweet voiced bird has flown,
Strange that we should slight the violets
Till the lovely flowers are gone;
Strange that summer skies and sunshine
Never seem one-half so fair,
As when winter’s snowy pinions
Shake their white down in the air.”

And so the winter passed on until one morning in April mother found that her feet had the chill of death in them. Father was in Caribou working and we were alone on the place. Grandma said she was no worse, that she had no pain and she ate some breakfast. We warmed some flannels and tried to get some heat in her limbs. She said she was not cold and as I stood by her she asked, “Mary, will you bring me a drink of water?” I flew to get it for she had a look in her face that is seen only on those who are going. I did not exactly understand it then. Mother was standing by the stove warming some flannels and crying. I said as I passed her, “Oh, mother, do you think she is worse?” “I am afraid,” said mother, “that she is going to die.”

I helped her up and she leaned on my shoulder while she drank. It made a strange, rattling sound and I called to mother, “Oh, come quick,” for I could see that her eyes were fixed. We laid her down and all was over in a second and she had not realized that she was dying at all. “God’s finger touched her and she slept.” She had always dreaded the struggle of death and when it came there was none. Jennie stayed with mother while I went after Mrs. Meyers, our neighbor, and the dear woman re-

mained with us until father came, and soon our lovely grandma was but a sweet memory to us.

She never dreamed of being a saint but I think that in the day when the Lord shall gather the gems for His Kingdom my dear and patient grandmother will shine as one of His brightest jewels.

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain for the former things are passed away.”

CHAPTER XXI.

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES

I, and my brothers and sisters as well, were all trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Our mother had a deeply religious nature and father was a Methodist local preacher. There was a large family and no one except mother to do the work. She had little time at her command but she tried to teach us right principles. She taught us much of the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom. Her religion was of the solemn type; she loved solemn music and would sing the old hymns in a voice that I have never heard surpassed for beauty, strength and sweetness combined. Had she been trained there was surely a fortune in it. I was always thrilled by it.

I cannot remember the time when I learned to pray. We were taught the old time religion that had a wholesome fear of the Lord. Perhaps it was too severe, but I would like to see more reverence among young people than is common at this time. We took things literally then. I have often heard Billie solemnly tell the others that "if they told lies they would be burned in Satan's fire."

This seemed to be terrible to think of and still I remember I told a lie to shield myself when I was a small child and I saw mother did not doubt my word in the least. I was not happy for the rest of the day and after going to bed could not sleep. I suffered terribly and although I fully expected a whipping for the lie and the fault as well, I at last got up and came out to the room where mother was sewing alone. She started when she saw me and asked if I were sick. I said "Oh, ma, I have told a lie and I did take the pie (I think it was pie)."

She put her sewing down and told me to come to her and instead of whipping me she talked very solemnly about sin and had me kneel down at her knee and ask God to forgive me. She then kissed me and sent me back to

bed. I was a very much relieved and happy little girl. I felt that I had been forgiven and soon fell asleep. I never forgot how miserable that lie made me feel until confession was made.

As I look back now the simple unquestioning faith of my childhood was very beautiful, but as I grew older I began to have doubts as to my conversion. I could not remember an experience of any thing miraculous such as I often heard Christian people talking of, but, although I could not name the day I was converted, I am sure I was a very sincere little Christian.

After we moved to the ranch, when I was about fourteen, I read something about riches drawing Christians away from God and of course I was familiar with what the Bible has to say on that subject. I felt that I would not for worlds possess riches or anything else that would come between me and my Lord. I reasoned too, that as I grew older I might not always think as I did then, so I went up stairs and knelt beside the rough bed which I shared with my sisters and prayed as earnestly as possible that I might never be rich. I have often smiled at this, for it was a very unlikely thing that I would ever be tempted in that way. The room in which I knelt was not ceiled, the rough lumber and joists all guiltless of paper or paint, with one tiny window, and the little kneeling figure as innocent of fashion or fame as a babe. I have never, however, been sorry I made that prayer, for I feel much the same now. If that spirit is not one of the proofs of conversion, I do not know where to look for it at the present time.

Life in a large family is nothing if it is not strenuous. Among us there are no two alike in temperament. One of the proofs I had of not being converted was that I got out of patience sometimes in various arguments and all sorts of pranks that are going on in a family like ours. I asked father about it and he said the only anger he felt was "righteous indignation." That left me in a fog still, for I could not feel that mine was of that order.

I found a book whose title was "The Anxious Inquirer" and read and studied over it faithfully. Often while read-

ing I felt as though I could believe. One Sunday I read and prayed the entire afternoon and was sure that I was converted at last. I felt very happy and all went well for a day or two until one of my sisters was particularly provoking and when I was losing my temper, threw up my religion, saying, "a pretty Christian you are." I straightway lost what little self control I had and shook her. I did not hurt her much for she went off laughing.

This finished my hopes and I dared not make a profession until four years later. Being away from home most of the time and tossed and buffeted about from one place to another at last I found myself in Boulder in the home of Dr. Allen. I have never forgotten the songs I heard Mrs. Allen sing. I first heard the "Ninety and Nine" from her and cried as I washed the dishes while she sang to the baby. I began to see things in a different light.

I think that in my early youth I expected too much of myself. If instead of thinking I ought never to feel irritated I had asked to be forgiven for the fault and then felt that all was right between the loving Father and his child I might have been spared much doubt and discouragement. At that early date I knew nothing of the great sinful world and its disappointments.

There were some meetings held in the old Congregational church in the winter of 1876 and I there found saving faith, and, thank God, have never lost it since.

"I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary and worn and sad;
I found in Him a resting place
And He hath made me glad."

The faith I had so much trouble in finding has helped me through many a trial, for mine has been a difficult path most of the time. It has kept me from gloomy thoughts so that I have been happy in the main. When the storm has been fierce I have suffered keenly at times, being only human, but the petty vexations of life have had

little power over me. I have thought sometimes that my faith has been more sure because of some things I have endured.

"I hold it true with him who sings,
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping stones
Of their dead selves to higher things."

CHAPTER XXII.

POETRY IN A SNOW STORM

As time passed and the income from the potato crops became less and less, father was obliged to go back to the mines to work in winter in order to make ends meet, leaving the place in the care of the family. This was especially hard for poor mother and also for Billie, who although a good boy and entirely trustworthy, had a habit of worrying or troubling as he expressed it. In fact he was quite the opposite of little Jim whom he often accused of "not having a bit of thought," an accusation that did not trouble Jim in the least.

The spring I was working at Dr. Allen's, Billie, who was very fond of me came after me one morning to make a little visit home. We started out in the afternoon on horseback. The weather, which had been fine in the earlier part of the day, changed and by the time we reached the foothills it was raining a little. We were warmly dressed and I, being of a hopeful turn of mind, did not think of it at all seriously but poor Billie began at once to "trouble" for fear it would be a big storm and there was very little fodder for the stock at home and he was sure the rain would turn to snow as we got farther into the mountains. His fears were not without foundation for before we reached the head of the canon, the snow was falling very fast and it was evident that we were to have a bad storm.

Father was away at Caribou working and that made it the harder for poor Billie who felt that all the care of the place was on him. The others helped of course but he felt the responsibility. I saw this and tried to cheer him all I could. I told everything funny and interesting that I could think of and then tried singing but as I was not much of a singer and had it all to myself, that did not last a great while. I then began reciting poetry.

He seemed quite interested in this at first. I had been learning several scenes from Scott's Marmion and went through the one between Douglas and Marmion, the trial of Constance, and the battle of Flodden Field with all the thrill I could possibly muster. I explained the poem too so that he might understand it all. I could occupy my own thoughts all right but when it came to him, that was clearly a case "beyond my practice" for he became more and more cast down and at last turned to me and said, "Mary, all you have been saying is awful good poetry, the best I ever heard in my life, but I can't help troubling," and the poor little fellow broke down and began to cry in earnest. I shall never forget the utterly dejected looking figure he made, even the horse he was riding seemed to partake of the general gloom, with its head hung down in the falling snow. I knew he was wet and cold and so was I, but there was nothing for us to do but go on and make the best of it, so we urged the horses along in the storm.

It was slow progress but we were getting nearer home with every step and so I told him and when we reached a bend in the road that told us that we had only one more mile to go, he cheered up enough to tell me that when he was a man I should stay with him always and he would make the living while I should keep house. I was older by a few years and did not feel so sure of that but it was wonderfully sweet to hear.

It was dark by the time our journey was ended and the welcome light from the window of our home came into view. We found within a rousing fire, dry clothing, a good hot supper and plenty of sympathy and we were soon enjoying it all. The girls and Jim had all the chores done and before long "sleep, the innocent sleep, sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care," was doing its best to efface the troubles of the day.

In the morning we found the snow pretty deep and if we could not get something for the cattle to eat they must suffer. A neighbor of ours, two miles distant, raised considerable hay and we thought he might still have some

for sale, so after breakfast the two boys took a sled and went to see. They came back with some baled hay and the news that we could have all we needed.

In a few days the snow was gone, the sun shining, the birds singing and spring had come to stay until it had given place to summer.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE MOUNTAIN LION

Did you ever hear the cry of a mountain lion? I have heard it twice and was exceedingly glad it was a safe distance from me. The first time, I was out gathering dry pieces of wood for the Sunday fires. We lived in the woods and my husband was working at a saw mill. He was not strong and I thought it would help him if I picked up the wood which lies in dry pieces everywhere in the mountains.

It was just as the dusk was deepening into dark and my old apron was pretty well loaded. I was not dreaming of danger when that cry rang out on the still air. I shall not attempt to describe it only that there was something of the cat nature about it and that all the cats I could think of could not equal it all combined. It thrilled me through and through and my blood seemed to turn to ice. I looked toward the house. It was not a great distance from me down the hill side but it looked very far. The terrible sound came from the mountain above me so I was safe enough but I did not feel very secure. I made very good time in running to it and spent the next half hour in great anxiety about James who was at the mill. He had not heard it at all in the noise of the great saw as it tore through the pine logs. My brother Harry, who was out hunting rabbits, heard it and took the nearest road home. The other boys laughed and called him a baby, but I told them all they would have run as fast as he, had they been out in the dark alone within sound of that voice.

The second time I heard it was in the dead of night. I was in bed, safe enough of course, but the same feeling came over me as when I was standing on the mountain side among the tall dark pines. I called softly, "James, did you hear that?" and he said, "yes." I asked him what it was and he answered, "It cannot be a common animal" and owned to a feeling of dread although he had never heard of a Rocky Mountain wild animal trying to get

into a house. In fact, from all I have heard, they are very shy and keep away from man as a rule. It is only occasionally that they are ever known to annoy the settlers.

One, however, visited our neighborhood when I was a young girl. Father had killed a beef and had taken it to Caribou for sale. I was there working at the time and accompanied him home for a short visit. As we drove homeward he told me of this marauder who had visited all the lower places, catching chickens, chiefly and prowling around at night. He told of Mr. —'s family being awakened at night by some animal among their young chickens which were kept under the house, it being only a frame shanty built on tree stumps when a saw mill had been on the place. He at once arose to drive the intruder away thinking it might be a skunk or at most a fox, so he sallied forth with a small lamp in one hand and armed with a broom in the other.

He was a tall man and was obliged to stoop considerably to see what species of vermin was making the trouble. To his astonishment there stood, a few feet from him, a mountain lion with a chicken in its mouth. It was not in the least afraid and gave an ominous growl. He was not hunting lions just then and got into the house with his lamp leaving the chickens to their fate. There were no fire arms in the house or he would certainly have tried a shot at him.

As father talked it grew dark and the mountains, with their rocks and pine trees, which were always like friends to me, began to look gloomy, and I often looked back to see if we were followed, but we reached home safely and after the noisy welcome and supper was over and all had gone to rest except mother and me, we settled down for one of the heart to heart talks we always indulged in when I was sojourning at home. As we talked we suddenly became aware that some animal was outside and of course our first thought was of the lion.

The kitchen door was open and mother said we must shut it, so out there we went, I carrying the lamp, while she shut and barred the door. The frame father had hung the

beef on to prepare it for market was still standing and there was the smell of blood and a few scraps of refuse were lying about. The lion must have been attracted by this and we could hear it snuffing around and after a while it made a scratching sound as if sharpening its claws on the logs of the house.

I never could have been a hunter, for I was scared to death with but the thickness of a door or window between us and that strange creature. I got the axe and father's gun and we scurried up stairs where the rest of the family were all asleep.

Mother thought it best not to waken them as father had only a shot gun and he might feel called upon to interfere with a lion, as he had done with a skunk at another time, and might not escape with merely a bad smell as he had done that memorable night.

We did not sleep much, or at least I did not although long enough to dream that a large yellow lion was walking up the garden path as though he meant to make short work of the entire family. I awoke to hear father and the boys out of doors exclaiming over the large lion tracks they found all around the back of the house. A sprinkle of snow had fallen just after dark and that made the tracks plainly visible. There were long scratches on the logs of the house also, made by his claws so that we were not mistaken in our fears.

Now I am aware of the fact that this is a very tame lion story for hearing them a mile away and knowing them to be just outside is not at all thrilling after the door is shut, but I give it just as it happened and there was plenty of thrill in it for me at the time. Ray, my youngest, says, "Ma could write quite a story if she only knew how to put in a few lies to make it thrilling."

I am not writing romances and could not if I would, but I am only living over again the days that are past and I see again the pines tossing in the wind or silently standing just before sunset, casting their long graceful shadows, and am listening to the twitter of the birds, and the beauty and glory of God's creation has entered my soul as it did in the days of my youth.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TRAPPING WILD ANIMALS

A few days ago I read of a man who, in setting a trap for wild animals, accidentally caught both hands in its relentless steel jaws. The details are too horrifying to repeat, but he was almost dead when he was finally found and released.

This has suggested a story of a time during the latter part of our ranch life when we had an experience with one of these terrible traps. I had made a dress for my three-year-old boy, Jimmie, out of a broadcloth coat of his father's; it was trimmed with red braid and looked so well that I was much pleased with the attempt at making over old garments, an occupation in which I was destined to become quite proficient, from necessity rather than choice, in after years.

One afternoon my mother and I called on a neighbor who had lately come to live at a sawmill camp just above one of our fields. The children accompanied us, Jimmie wearing his new dress. We had a pleasant call and as it was still early we went down to mother's instead of going directly home. There was no one in sight on the place as we came down back of the house and mother and I went inside while the children ran down the garden path to the croquet ground to play as usual. In a few minutes we were startled by loud screams of terror and anguish from them. I ran to them as quickly as possible, but being near sighted, could not detect the cause until I reached them, when to my horror I found my baby boy with his arm caught in the great No. 2 steel trap used for trapping coyotes and other animals. I called loudly for help and after a terrible moment or two, father appeared at the barn door. He was very deaf and I had some difficulty in making him understand what was wrong, but when at last he realized it all, he too, was horror stricken.

My husband and brothers were all gone after the cattle and the neighbors were so far away that we decided ourselves to try and release him. Mother was too weak and

nervous to be of any assistance to us. I seemed to have the strength of a man for the first time as we bore down on the great springs and, in much less time than it takes to tell the story, we had the precious little arm out and he was in his grandfather's arms.

I shall never forget my feelings as I began to examine the injury which, although it was almost incredible to me, was not serious for the trap had closed on the flat side of the bone just above the wrist and the thick cloth of the sleeve had prevented the teeth from cutting the tender flesh. It was bruised considerably but that was all. After it was all past my over-wrought nerves gave way and I became so weak that I was unable to stand and indulged in a good cry, womanlike, while father explained how the trap happened to be left where it was and meanwhile Jimmie sat on my lap and wiped my eyes, saying over and over, "What 'oo trying about, mama. I am out of the 'teel a trap."

The explanation was that a hen had stolen her nest in the pile of rocks south of the barn and had furnished a meal for a coyote and the trap had been set and father had placed it inside the gate while he went to the barn and unluckily we had arrived on the scene during the few moments he was gone. He had no idea that any one beside himself was on the place.

I have always pitied animals caught in traps and cannot bear to even set them for mice. I read a magazine article some time ago on the terrible cruelty that is inflicted on fur bearing animals in trapping them for their skins. They are sometimes left for days together fast in traps, in agony from wounds and starvation and the average hunter cares nothing for their suffering.

Whenever it is necessary to use these terrible things they should be closely watched and the victims put out of pain as quickly as possible.

The animals in our neighborhood were very shy of traps, it seemed as if they had an instinct to warn them of their danger. I do not remember of more than two being caught on our place, one lynx and one coyote and both these paid the penalty for stealing chickens.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CARIBOU FIRE OF 1879

Caribou was our chief market for the ranch produce for a good many years and besides having worked there at different times, it became my home for the first years of my married life. My sister, Jennie, lived there several years. It was, at the time of my writing, a lively mining town of several hundred inhabitants. It was close by the snowy range and as far as I know, the most stormy town in the Rocky Mountains, there being a direct sweep for the wind through the town from the range.

There had been forest fires for several weeks in various parts of the mountains. I had been on a visit to my sister, Eva, at Central City, and returned one Saturday near the middle of September. It was very smoky toward the range as the stage passed and the atmosphere was clouded with it as far as we could see and, through it, the sun hung like a fiery ball and a feeling of fear came over me as the men talked of the valuable timber these fires were destroying, and I hoped it could not reach any of the smaller towns. The trouble all came from careless campers neglecting to put out their fires.

On reaching home I told James, my husband, how the fires were spreading but he said there were men watching them and thought we, in Caribou, were in no danger.

The next morning the sun rose still red and lowering through the smoke and as the day wore on the wind blew so violently as to become a gale. I was very uneasy all day but we kept on hearing reports of no danger to the mines or the town. James was superintendent of the Sunday school which met at half past two and he went there as usual. Before he had been gone from home long I saw that the whole sky above Caribou Hill was red with flames and there were many people running up the hill opposite our house. I took my baby out of her cradle and wrapped her in a shawl and joined the people in the street. I soon

learned that the lower street of the town was on fire and the mine buildings were burning and there were men in the mine who would be smothered unless they could be gotten out.

I turned to see the wife of one of them, who was my friend. She looked at me with a horror-stricken, despairing face that I shall never forget and I tried my best to encourage her. Jennie and her two children were there too. Everyone seemed to be panic stricken, the fire had come down upon us so suddenly at the last.

James soon appeared and started for the mine to try to find whether Mr. A— and the other men had escaped. He met them running down the hill and our fears as to their safety were soon relieved but they had a narrow escape. The signal to come up had been sent to them as soon as the danger was realized. The engineer stood at his post with the flames roaring around and almost strangling him with their fiery breath until the men, uninjured, stepped from the bucket just as the great rope above them was smoking. I do not remember his name and I was never acquainted with him. I never heard that he received honor or fame for his heroism. He had just stood at his post until his duty was fulfilled and four human lives had been saved by his brave action.

We now thought that the entire place was doomed and our street was filled with crying women and children and distracted men. We lived on the northern side of town and Jennie's house was just above ours, a little to the south-west, and was more exposed to the fire. There was a park of considerable size a short distance from our place at the north and out of danger unless the wind should change, which was not likely, as the hard winds almost invariably come from the west in the mountains.

The people now began to flock to the park. We tarried by our stuff until a firebrand from the hill above flew over our heads and started a lively fire on Idaho Hill, directly east of us. We had fire now on all sides except the north and James told me to put on my winter cloak and wrap little Mamie well and follow the people who were

going to the park. We would be safe there and he would stay and do what he could to save the house. I had no hope of that and as I looked back at the dear home I said, "Goodbye, everything." Then the cat brushed against my foot with a pitiful mew and I said, "Goodbye, Sambo, I hope you will escape." Just then I noticed the chickens frightened by the smoke and the appearance of darkness as of approaching night, all hurrying to their roosts and said, "Goodbye, chickens, you are going to be burned," and I begged James not to risk his life.

Jennie had made herself and the children ready, so off we started, each carrying one child and leading another, for she had three and the oldest was under four years. James came to the road and told us on no account to leave the park but get into a cabin if we could and Jack and he would be right after us if there was any danger, but until then they were both agreed to try and save the houses. I told him we would do the best we could, and after we had gone a short distance, two men stopped us and asked us if they could help with the children. Louie, the oldest, clung to us and began to cry, but dear little Johnnie held up his arms to one of them to be carried. The young man asked whose child he was and said to Jennie, "You may trust me to take care of him," and so he did although we did not see him again until the next day. We drifted down the park with many others, until late in the afternoon, we who had children crowded into an abandoned miner's cabin.

Even such a day as it was, did not pass without a laughable incident or two, for instance, a wild looking man appeared at the door with the question "Has anybody seen my wife?" We had all seen her earlier in the flight carrying a large clock and crying bitterly. She had probably gone on with another party who had started for a point on the range above the fire, so a young girl spoke up cheerfully, "Oh, Mr.—I think she has—" but he stopped her with a tragic air and the words, "You think do you know? I want facts, nothing else will do." In the face of this repudiation of thoughts of any kind she was, of course,

speechless, but some men tried to make him understand that his wife was likely with the party with whom we had last seen her. He followed in that direction with the parting words, "I tell'e, boys, I'm broken 'earted." We felt sorry for him and no one thought of laughing until a wag commenced rocking himself to and fro groaning and asking, "Where is my dear, too? I tell'e, boys, I'm broken 'earted. Cruel as it seemed there was a hearty laugh.

The men who remained were all fighting the fire and it was rather dreary for us forsaken women, but soon another frenzied member of the nobler sex approached our cabin door shouting, "Run for your lives! Run! In less than twenty minutes the fire will be here!" The children began to cry but I did not believe it and went to the door to see if the fire was any nearer. It was not, as I could plainly see, so I turned to him and asked, "Where would you advise us to run with all these little children?" He did not answer me but stood with his gloomy face turned toward the burning mountain.

The sight was a never to be forgotten one. There were the angry flaming sunset skies, the rolling billows of smoke, and Caribou mountain with its hundreds of cords of wood burning on its top and sides. We had a perfect view of it for the smoke was all going east and it was clear where we were. I told him that we were in no danger but he, too, started for the range.

Nothing could be done to put out the fires on the hill but as the evening wore on we heard that the town was not all gone. The wind had carried the burning embers so high that the main part of the place which was at the foot of the hill had escaped and there was enough air for the men who worked to put out such as did fall with the city hose. At last word came that it was safe for us to return as the wind had ceased and the fires about town were under control. Caribou hill was still a mighty blaze and would be for some time to come.

No word had come to Jennie and me, and we expected James to help us with the children. As the last party left the cabin we dejectedly followed, for we felt we could not

stay alone in that cabin so far from home. Before long we heard the cheery tones of James asking Mrs. T— for our welfare; we quickly spoke for ourselves and he came in sight dimly through the smoky air carrying a basket of lunch in one hand and a steaming pot of tea in the other. He was afraid we would be too tired and weak to walk home after that exciting day and it was then eleven o'clock. We ate our lunch and drank our tea by the roadside and were happy in spite of our troubles.

He told us that Jack had great difficulty in saving their house and was now watching both places while he came to find us. The absence of little Johnnie was our chief anxiety but still Jennie thought the unknown man would take care of him. We women lay down with the children in our house while the men still took care of the fires and thus ended the first day of the Caribou fire for us.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE CARIBOU FIRE—TWO

In the morning we found the extent of the damage done by the fire of the day and night before. Everything on Caribou hill, including a few dwelling houses and cabins, besides the mine buildings and much valuable machinery and long rows of wood corded for winter use at the mine, was a total loss. There was nothing left below the Sherman house, which was the chief hotel. In all there were forty houses and cabins destroyed. The Caribou, the principal mine of the place, would have to be shut down for some time and many families would have to leave town on that account, but it was wonderful that anything had escaped that whirlwind of flame.

James went after some beefsteak and was soon frying it while Jennie and I gathered what we could find of eatables, for we knew there would soon be some of the wanderers returning. We were watching too, for the man who had Johnnie. They were the first to arrive and the little fellow was as happy and smiling as though he had slept in his own bed.

The young man had held him in his arms all night and kept him warm and some people had been provident enough to carry bread and other provisions, and as is always the custom in the mountains in any distress, there is no "mine" or "thine" but all share alike, so no one had suffered much from hunger, but it had been pretty cold being so near the snow. James went out and invited them in to breakfast as they passed and several accepted.

The reunited family bearing the clock returned and among the last were poor Mr. and Mrs. A— and their little boy. Mr. A— never did get over a feeling of vexation at having run away from a fire, for running from danger was not usual with him, but where the choice lay between taking care of his wife, who was not well, and facing the other danger, it may be that the bravest of all is the man who runs.

There were no lives lost in the fire but it was indirectly the cause of the death of one, and there were sick people who were taken out into the storm, among them the doctor's wife, who did not live long afterward.

The Leadville excitement was then at its height and Mr. W—, one of our neighbors, went there with many others in search of work. He found a rough cabin to live in with a friend but soon contracted pneumonia. He was rational and his partner, not realizing his danger, went to work on the night shift having left medicine on a chair by the bedside. When he returned in the early morning he was shocked to find the patient dead and cold.

There was a wife and four small children left at Caribou and their home and clothing and even what little money they had saved was swept away in the great fire, the husband and wife, each thinking the other had saved the money. It was one of the first houses to burn, standing as it did on the brow of the hill. When this worse calamity fell upon them the sympathy of all was unbounded and they were cared for as well as possible.

Clothing and help from the valley were sent to those who had suffered the loss of all their worldly goods and soon all were at work again doing their best to repair damages. How bravely the children of men go through every kind of disaster when we stop to consider it!

I have lost my place in the great highway of life and so am continually looking backward, not with sorrow but with a feeling of content as of one who has climbed the long trail and reached the heights. I think of the men who climbed the steep hill toward the mines, dinner pail in hand, facing the roaring, stinging, icy blast from the range, and of the women who staid at home keeping the hearth fires for them, many of them cooking for boarders as well as having the care of their own families. And there were happy homes then, too, for happiness is a strange plant and is just as likely to thrive on some bleak mountain in a log cabin as in a modern costly dwelling in the city.

The men, very many of them, have passed into the great beyond, for the lives of those who find the gold and

silver in the veins where they lie hidden, are not usually long, and many a tragedy could be told of what has happened in the rocky depths of the mines and while I breathe I shall have a warm sympathy for those who toil therein.

“I see from my house by the side of the road,
By the side of the highway of life,
The men who press with the ardor of hope,
The men who are faint with the strife;
But I turn not away from their smiles and their tears,
Both parts of an infinite plan,
Let me live in a house by the side of the road,
And be a friend to man.”

There was James, dear, true James, who worked so happily that morning, after the long night of toil, to refresh the returning weary ones and who was always a brave and gentle man, who lost his life through toiling in the mines of these mountains around us that lift their heads into the clouds.

It is more than twenty long years since I last heard his voice, once so silvery, but then hoarse with approaching death, and as I think of him I turn to the words of Him who said, “I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live,” and I know that I shall meet him where there is limitless life and joy instead of earth with its cares and losses.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE CARIBOU CHURCH

I first went to Caribou in the year 1873 and at that time the Presbyterians were holding services there and these continued until a few Methodist families settled there and a small church was organized. At first the minister lived on the valley and came up on Saturday to stay over Sunday.

It was a flourishing society for it had, during a number of years, a few pillars in the church who could be depended upon everywhere. I wish every place, whether a mining town or not, could possess a goodly number of such men of God.

I have never seen a church like it in some respects. One was that the work of the church was carried on by the men, while the sisters, with few exceptions, followed St. Paul's advice to keep silence in the public service. They were never heard from unless occasionally in class meeting a faint voice might be heard which was soon drowned in a flood of tears. I was just as timid as any of them and never did conquer it, so that I could speak freely in meeting. I think we were not behind other women in talking fluently at home and could doubtless inquire of our husbands as well as any woman of Paul's time. I do not think we ever gave the Scripture on this a thought, for I have always looked upon the apostle to the Gentiles as a man mighty in word and deed and I believe he wrote the words to the Corinthians in deference to the custom of his day, which forbade women speaking in public. I am sure it was—

“For Christ he wore the heavy chain,
For Christ he had nor wealth nor home.”

and not from any disrespect for womankind.

I once heard a woman say she disliked Paul because he was a woman hater. I wonder if she ever read the

epistle to the Ephesians or the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians and pondered them.

Our Caribou men were not behind in respect for the women of the church and I shall never forget the friendly handshakes they gave at prayer meeting nor the fervent prayers they offered. All day they toiled in the mines but were always clean and even carefully dressed as they went out to help keep the light of Christ's gospel burning for the people. I can now almost hear a brother saying "Oh Lord, revive thy work in this place" and his petition that we might not be like the unthinking horse that rusheth into the battle, but might approach the throne with reverence and godly fear.

The expression about the horse has been worn out and laughed at years ago, but I cannot laugh for I have heard these words from true lips upon which the silence of death fell long ago, and could wish for the church now no greater blessing than that the fervent spirit which animated them might rest upon it. The words uttered may be different but what is mortal speech to the ear of Omnipotence, and reverence and godly fear is always a grace that is to be desired.

We worshipped some years in the school house and when the presiding elder paid his visits, we felt that a great man was among us. At last, however, a church was built and Bishop Warren visited the place to raise funds to pay for the edifice. I heard him preach and saw at once that he was great enough to reach the hearts of the people. It is only petty ones who feel so much superior to others whom, with their advantages might have surpassed them in attainments, but owing to circumstances have been called to fill the humbler places in God's great plan. The bishop talked to us as a brother and reached the hearts and pocket books as well.

Dr. Crary was presiding elder when I was married and the Rev. John Stocks was pastor. The doctor was very deaf and used an ear trumpet when holding a conversation. I had met him already and was not expecting an introduction and was taken by surprise upon his next

visit when Mrs. S— led me up to him and introduced me as Mr. Collins' new wife. She shouted this piece of news into the trumpet several times before the elder understood and when at last he turned it directly toward me with smiling face and inquiring air, I was stricken speechless and could only wonder at my boldness in marrying one of the pillars, although he was the most unassuming among them. He saw my confusion at once and took possession of the elder, trumpet and all until I recovered. I entertained the doctor in my home afterward and as he always smiled so graciously I think he understood me although I never did say much that he could hear.

We had a local preacher or two most of the time. There was Mr. Gumma who could not be prevailed upon to preach often but when he did, impressed his hearers greatly; and there was Mr. Hicks, who did not preach or make claim of superior sanctity, but who was a Christian man although inclined a little too much to merriment so the people thought. Mr. Stephens was class leader and was always the same, a man blameless in life, somewhat slow of speech, always uttering words of truth and telling of the Savior he loved. I never shall forget how his face looked one day as he spoke these words, "He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities." He spoke with the accent of his native land, England, and strange as it might sound now, there is nothing I would rather hear than a prayer delivered with all the fervent eloquence of one to whom the speech of the homeland still clings.

Each of the brethren in that little church up among the snowbanks bore his share of its general work. They performed the janitor work, collected from house to house, and from young men individually, for the minister's salary with no thought of recompense for their labor. We also had a young man with us occasionally who aspired to scholarship and oratory.

My own father preached there many times for he often worked in Caribou winters and came from the ranch more than once to conduct a burial service, when for some reason or other there was no minister to be had.

One of the local preachers never seemed to be able to find language sufficiently exalted to express himself. I once heard him begin a prayer thus: "Oh, thou omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Jehovah." On my way home Brother Hicks asked me what I thought of it. I said, "I would rather hear you pray," but he seemed shocked at my lack of appreciation and went on telling me how fine it was, ending with the words, "To hear the language rolling over his tongue was a caution." I did not dispute this for it surely was. Poor man, he died years ago from a sore hurt received in a mine and before this has learned the song of Moses and the Lamb.

James, as he often told me, was not talented, could not preach, but could pray by a dying bed or with a penitent, seeking soul, at any time and was always to be depended upon by minister or people. If another were ill or failed, he it was who built the fires, swept the plain pine floor or did any service required. He always held some office and was also one of the collectors and has been met with an oath more than once when, upon this duty, he happened to speak to one, created in the image of God, which image the saloon was doing its best to destroy; for there it was, as it always has been elsewhere, doing its work of death. He has climbed the rocky mountain side in the biting wind and snow to where some household fire gleamed, through many a winter on this same errand, his only wish being that the support of the gospel might be maintained in Caribou. He was never a strong man and this was not an easy task after his day's work.

At church he raised the tunes, as a rule, in the days when there was no organ, and in case some kind brother, to help him out, started a long meter hymn to a short meter tune, he was ready with the right melody. Not talented, he thought, but if there were many more of his kind we should not greatly miss the lack of it. A man whose word was his bond, who would "talk no slander, no, nor listen to it;" was as honorable in private as in public and for whose sons I could pray for nothing better than that they may possess the true and gentle chivalry that is theirs by right of inheritance.

The little church has long been dropped from the list of the Colorado conference and its members are scattered. Many of them have passed on through death's mystery into eternal life. Some of the old Caribou folks, as we call them, are here in Boulder; others are scattered like the "graves of a household by mountain, plain and sea." For some of us the sun of life is nearing the western horizon and for all who lived at the time I am thinking of, with the exception of the children, the shadows of life are beginning to lengthen.

We as a church and as a people had our faults, but I know we all did think kindly of each other and if neighbor meet neighbor of long ago, there is a glad recognition and hearty hand clasp. Perhaps it is because we faced so many storms together that we hold each other in loving remembrance. My prayer is that when we shall have finished our last journey on mountain or plain, the mercy of the Lord, which is from everlasting to everlasting, shall have guided each of us into the desired haven.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

REMINISCENSES OF BEAR CANON

I was looking at some views of scenery on the new Moffat Road recently. They were beautifully tinted and some one said, "Don't you think they paint them and make them prettier than they are?" I answered, "They may paint them as they will but they can never equal them as they are in reality," and my thoughts ran backward to the time when, for twenty years, I lived among those mountains, "rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun" and never once tired of their grandeur.

What artist could paint the free air and glorious sunlight on the quivering green leaves and wild flowers of a June morning when, as the old hymn says, "both heaven and nature sing," and there is everywhere the everlasting hills with their tall pines and evergreens standing in gloomy pride as a background for the picture?

No hand save that of Omnipotence could hang scenes of the limitless expanse of mountains, sky and plain such as are spread before us who live under the shadow of those granite peaks.

In my early girlhood there was a toll road up Bear Canon to my father's ranch and I was always spell-bound with delight on a trip from it to Boulder.

We always drove the oxen and I rode by father's side perched on a load of lumber or potatoes as the case might be. The start was made in the early morning and when we reached the head of the canon, which was about four miles from home, father always stopped and placed the rough lock on the brake and saw that everything was secure. The oxen, however they might act in other places, were sure footed on that road as if they had muscles of iron.

As we slowly wound around the mountain side there was a sheer descent of hundreds of feet on the lower side and above us and across, the many colored rocks towered like the mighty battlements of giant castles. To me it was

inexpressibly grand and I felt no fear although there were the whitening bones of a horse and the wreck of a buggy to be seen in the abyss below.

The story was that some ladies had attempted to drive a balky horse over the road and the result lay there as a warning to others. The ladies escaped by jumping from the vehicle.

As we returned in the afternoon the patient cattle toiled up the hill and we walked to lighten their load and put rocks behind the wheels at their frequent rests and at every pause, looked back at the glory of it all again and again.

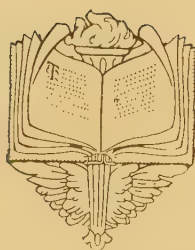
The wonderful works of nature to me always reflected nature's God. "To whom will ye liken God: who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and meted out the heavens with a span and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord, or being His counsellor, hath taught Him?"

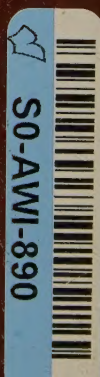
At last we reached the uplands and were soon at home again. And now I sit and think over the old scenes and there is not bitterness in them; if there ever were, it has all been taken away long ago and there is nothing left but the light of eventide.

Just as the trees stood and cast their long shadows at evening in my dear mountains, so I sit on the uplands of life, after the heat and burden of the day, and although I know that foot of mine shall never press carpet of pine needles or bed of kiniknic and my eyes shall never rest upon the glorious mountain tops with their covering of eternal snow, there is no pain in the thought and I hope e'er long to be laid where the shadow of the Rockies will reach my resting place until the trumpet shall sound and I shall awake in the likeness of Him whose hands created them in all their majesty and glory.

THE END

Written in 1908 and 1909.





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